

# **IMPACT EVANGELISM**

**Being an Effective Witness**

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**Bill Rudge**



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## **Impact Evangelism**

Being an Effective Witness

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Published by Living Truth Publishers  
A Division of Bill Rudge Ministries, Inc.  
Hermitage, Pennsylvania  
[www.billrudge.org](http://www.billrudge.org)

ISBN 978-1-889809-24-3

Cover Design: Alpha Advertising  
Typesetting Pine Hill Graphics

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Printed in the United States of America

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# The Strongest



It has been said that a strong person stands up for himself or herself, and a stronger person stands up for others. But, I say that the strongest person stands up for their testimony of Jesus Christ and God's Word.

The purpose of my writing this book and sharing so many scriptures, biblical principles and personal illustrations is to inspire you to let your light shine and let your witness go forth so that all the world may see and hear the amazing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I have evaluated the evidence for my faith and am convinced it is superior to any other option. Through God's Spirit, I strive to handle myself with courage, strength and dignity. He has not made me a mindless fanatic who acts like a fool; however, if people think I am foolish, it is not because of how I act but because of what I believe. I believe in a bloodstained cross and the resurrection.

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).

## To Glorify Christ

My desire is to glorify Jesus Christ in every aspect of my life. I want to be a faithful witness physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Physically: how I take care of my body, what I do with it and what I put into it. Mentally and emotionally: renewing my mind with His Word and seeking to glorify Him in my thoughts and by my attitudes, desires and goals. Spiritually: being conformed to His likeness, manifesting the fruit and gifts of the Spirit and being led and empowered by His Spirit.

# Proclaiming Truth in a Hostile World



All the New Testament writers, except John, were martyred for their faith. According to tradition, John survived being plunged into boiling oil. Scripture reveals that as an old man he was exiled to the island of Patmos where he received the Revelation of Jesus Christ. During early church history, many believers in Christ were beheaded, thrown to wild animals, burned at the stake or faced equally horrendous tortures and martyrdom. Around the world today there are many missionaries, pastors and believers whose homes and possessions are confiscated; they suffer persecution, imprisonment, torture, rape and are martyred because of their testimony for Jesus.

The heartbeat and passion of the Lord Jesus Christ in these end times is for believers to be faithful witnesses for Him. How do we share our faith and be witnesses to a world becoming increasingly hostile to committed Christians? Only by the strength of God's Spirit and through the wisdom found in His Word is this possible. That is why evangelism, missions and witnessing need to be saturated with prayer and Bible study.

Despite intimidation from militants and extremists who beat and kill Christians, who burn their homes and churches (while often falsely claiming that people are forced or coerced to convert to Christianity), we are instructed by our Lord to share His love with a hurting and dying world. Despite our atheistic and pluralistic society that finds the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be offensive and calls evangelism a hate crime, our Lord commands us to proclaim His truth to this lost and hurting world.

## You Shall Be My Witnesses

The very last words Jesus spoke before He ascended to Heaven are recorded in Acts 1:8 (NKJV):

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and

Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The purpose of our empowerment by the Holy Spirit is to boldly and accurately proclaim Christ throughout the world (conforming believers into His image—Romans 8:29). The Lord is serious about fulfilling His Great Commission—taking the Gospel to the world and making disciples. When the early church remained in Jerusalem, He allowed persecution to arise which scattered them as witnesses. Scripture says that on the day of the stoning of Stephen “...a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles” (Acts 8:1). God used the original eleven disciples and Matthias (replacing Judas) and raised up missionaries like Paul, Barnabas and Silas to carry His Gospel throughout the Roman world.

The Shenango Valley, where I currently live, is my Jerusalem. Pennsylvania, Ohio and the U.S. are my Judea and Samaria. Samaria is also the “untouchables” such as lepers, street people, prisoners, outcasts and even the rich, famous and prestigious. The “end of the earth” is literally that.

There is a world of searching, spiritually hungry and thirsty people by whom many in the church are intimidated or have rejected as hopeless, or perhaps they do not want to waste their time. Nevertheless, these are people God cares for and wants us to reach.

Your “Jerusalem” may be your home or workplace. Your “Judea” may be your street and neighborhood. Your “Samaria” may be beyond cultural barriers into someone else’s neighborhood. Your “end of the earth” may be where you go on vacation or on a mission trip. Wherever you go and whatever you do, you can be a witness for Jesus Christ.

## Ashamed or Not Ashamed?

It is increasingly offensive these days to be identified as a biblical Christian. There is a growing hostility for the Word of God and claiming Jesus as the only way of salvation. So, where do we stand as our culture moves further and further from the Jesus of the Bible? Do we acknowledge Jesus Christ, or do we deny Him? Are we afraid, embarrassed or ashamed to be identified as a believer in Jesus Christ?

A necessary criterion for being a disciple of Jesus is to acknowledge Him publicly. Romans 10:9-10 tells us:

...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

If you are in a plane that is going down, and you have a parachute under your seat, is it only enough to believe the parachute is there? You must put it on and open it to be saved. Belief in Jesus is more than just acknowledging His existence (even the demons do that and tremble—James 2:19) but requires embracing Him as your Savior and Lord and living your life for His purpose in creating you.

The one who acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord before others will be acknowledged by Him before God. The one who consistently disowns Jesus will be disowned by Him. Jesus stated in Matthew 10:32-33:

Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Most people refrain from sharing their faith because of fear—fear of not knowing what to say, fear of ridicule or rejection, fear of loss of position or prestige. Mark 8:34-38 makes clear the cost of discipleship:

And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

In the apostle Paul’s day, the crucifixion of Christ was both a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles (1 Corinthians 1:23). When Paul preached that Christ was crucified, the Jews were offended, and the Gentiles thought it was all nonsense. Paul, who eventually gave his life as a martyr, wrote in Romans 1:16:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Concerning the heroes of the faith, Hebrews 11:16 states:

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has



prepared a city for them.

## Not Just the Pastor's Job

Evangelism is not just the pastor's job, but the responsibility of all believers. The pastor is the shepherd of the flock: the shepherd feeds the sheep the Word of God and helps them grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Then, healthy sheep produce more sheep as they go out and share their testimony of Jesus and implant the seeds of God's Word in the hearts and lives of the people they encounter. If pastors and believers implement this biblical principle, the "church" will grow both numerically and spiritually.

Dr. David Jeremiah wrote the following in his October 2023 *Turning Points Magazine & Devotional*:

We are all missionaries, all evangelists, all witnesses for Him. But not every believer understands this. Years ago, I had a woman come up to me, point her finger right at my nose, and say, "You need to know something, young man. We pay your salary. We pay you to fulfill the Great Commission."

But that's not what the Bible says. Every committed Christian is the recipient and representative of the Great Commission. If I were the only evangelist in the church I pastor, our outreach would be very limited. But if all of us get involved, it's incredible what God can do.

## The Vine and the Branches

In John 15:5, Jesus tells us how to bear spiritual fruit:

I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

If you are in love with Jesus Christ and have a healthy relationship with Him, then you will produce spiritual offspring as a natural byproduct. That is why it is so crucial that you "know" Jesus and spend time in His Word, and you are on your knees in prayer (and fasting). When you are in love with Him, you cannot help but share Him with others.

## Led By the Spirit

To be an effective witness for Jesus Christ, His Spirit must lead us, and we need

discernment to hear and know His voice. That is why I spend time in prayer, fasting and seeking Him, so I may be sensitive to the leading of His Spirit. I spend time studying and researching Scripture, so I am able to proclaim His Word accurately. Jesus said in John 6:44, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him....” How could I ever impact even one life unless God’s Spirit goes before me and prepares the way? The apostle Paul was reliant upon God’s Spirit. He tells us in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 that “our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction....”

Although it is God’s revealed will in Scripture that we be witnesses for Him, there are many times I need specific guidance from God’s Spirit concerning with whom to share, what to say or not to say and how to say it. I rely on His Spirit to empower me to proclaim His truth boldly and accurately.

Countless times the Lord has led me by His Spirit to step out in faith, and I have chosen to obey. The results have often been great blessings and victories. Whether somebody needs help or is about to pass into eternity, we must be sensitive and obedient to the leading of God’s Spirit.

## Ripe Fruit

Leading someone to Christ is similar to picking fruit on a tree. If you pick the fruit before it is ripe, it doesn’t taste very good and can be damaged or ruined. It would have been better to wait and let it ripen more before picking it. On the other hand, to let fruit overripen on a tree and fall to the ground to rot is a complete waste of good fruit.

There is a balance and only God’s Spirit can teach you that balance.

While we should not try to force someone to come to Christ, we must not delay in offering to lead that person to Christ once the Spirit has opened their eyes and prepared their heart.

## God Gives the Increase

Sharing the Gospel is up to us, but salvation is the Lord’s responsibility. It is a biblical principle that believers work together in planting and watering the seeds of God’s Word—one plants and another waters, but God is the One who causes the growth.

While ministering in India, I was amazed at how many Hindus came to faith in Jesus Christ after my messages. I was merely there at the right time to reap the harvest following forty years of seed-planting by a faithful, elderly missionary. God used her lifelong witness in that region to prepare the people’s hearts.

The apostle Paul wrote:

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field [parable of the field, Matthew 13:24-30], you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it (1 Corinthians 3:5-10 NKJV).

## Navy Man

While visiting a Swami Temple (Self Realization Institute) in Southern California, there were people meditating all around the outside grounds, so I prayed, "Lord, who do You want me to talk to today?" I noticed a young man meditating by a pool who was not very focused, so I walked by slowly hoping he would open his eyes.

He looked up at me, so I said to him, "Do you mind if I ask you a question?" He said, "No." So I asked, "Are you into Eastern religion or are you a Christian?" (I knew what he was into, but I wanted to hear his response.) He said, "I am sort of in between both." I then asked, "Are you searching for truth?" He replied, "Yes." I said, "I'll bet you have a church background." He said he did but was looking for more.

I responded, "That's interesting because I was raised in church, rejected Jesus Christ and considered Western Christianity as being irrelevant. I got involved in Eastern and New Age beliefs and practices, which I eventually found to be deficient. Then, I was challenged to examine the claims of Jesus Christ. After doing so, I gave my life to Jesus Christ."

I told him in parting that I believe his search for truth will also lead him back to Jesus Christ. He replied, "I am in the Navy and stationed out here. I thank you for those comments." I then walked away so as not to disrupt the other people meditating.

Someone plants the seed in a heart, someone else waters and God makes it grow (1 Corinthians 3:6).

## Lights

Jesus said:

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).

It was a very clear night, and the ground was snow covered. I was flying back to Pittsburgh from a speaking engagement in the New York City area. During a portion of the flight, the visibility was so good that we could see the lights of Washington, D.C., over 100 miles away, glowing in the night. It was an awesome sight viewed by everyone on that plane.

Some of the passengers loved Washington D.C. and what it stood for. Others hated it. Yet, none could deny that Washington D.C. was there, shining brightly in the night. So too, as a Christian, some will love you and some will hate you, just as they hated Jesus Christ whom you represent (John 15:18). However, all should know (by what you say and how you live) that He is Lord of your life, and you are committed to Him. Your light should shine brightly in the darkness.

## Never Shared Christ

As a fitness instructor at the age of eighteen, a client of mine at the health spa took me out to eat. A few years later, having become a Christian, I met a man in church. I recognized him as the one who had taken me out to eat and realized he was a believer back then, yet he never said a word about Jesus to me.

Back then I could be intimidating, and maybe he felt that way. However, I would have had more respect for him, after becoming a Christian, had he at least attempted to share Jesus with me. What if I had been killed in my rebellious years? How would he have felt knowing he never even gave me the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ?

We must speak up and say something—even if it offends someone. Better to offend others and be disliked now, than conform to the world by compromising our convictions and be disliked later for not giving a warning and speaking the truth.

## Sharing Your Testimony

If you don't have an answer, you can do what the man who was born blind did. After he was healed by Jesus, he told his story. You can always share your testimony of what Jesus Christ has done in your life! John 9:24-25 tells us: "So a second time they [the Pharisees] called the man who had been blind, and said to him, 'Give glory to God; we know that this man [Jesus] is a sinner.' He then answered, 'Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.'"

While your testimony can be a powerful witness for the Lord, personal experience alone is not the final validation. Many people who have had mystical experiences or participated in occult practices sometimes tell of a changed life. However, the authority of Scripture (supporting our witness of Jesus) validates our testimonies as genuine.

Although your witness may be the answer to someone's prayer, ponder for a moment how many people you will meet in Heaven. Not only those your witness helped bring to Christ, but the many who came to Christ through the people you witnessed to witnessing to them, and on and on.

# My Life's Mission



God gave me a dream and then a vision to reach the nations of this world. The focus of my life and ministry is to proclaim the love and truth of Jesus Christ until every person in every nation has the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

The reason I speak and write—the passion that motivates me—is to lead people to Jesus Christ, challenging them to serve Him faithfully all the days of their lives. My life mission is to honor the Lord Jesus, fulfill His will, accomplish His purpose and advance His Kingdom.

Almost every conversation I have, everything I do, and nearly every relationship I develop will hopefully provide an immediate or eventual opportunity to share the love and truth of Jesus Christ. I have no hidden agenda; I am not trying to sell anything—I give everything away for free, and I am not trying to get them to join my church—I am not pastoring a church but directing an international outreach. All I want is to share with them God's free offer of eternal life.

Sometimes, I tell people up front, "I have an ulterior motive. No, I don't want anything from you; I just want to share with you God's amazing love and awesome truth." If the person is already a believer, then my goal is to encourage them in their relationship with Jesus Christ, to challenge them to faithfulness and commitment to the Lord and His Word and to motivate them to reach their maximum potential in Christ—physically, mentally, emotionally and above all, spiritually.

With my grandchildren, I am often telling stories of my childhood and the Bible, teaching them biblical principles, talking about health, nutrition, peer pressure, courage, wisdom and self-control and praying with and for them. The most valuable gift I can give to anyone is to share with them the truth and reality of Jesus Christ. That is why I attempt to take advantage of every opportunity. I encourage you to do so, too.

## Why Share?

This book is a compilation of some of my witness encounters throughout the

years. By the time you finish reading this book, I will have had more opportunities to share my faith in Christ in a variety of ways because every day, and in every way, I seek to be a witness for Jesus Christ. Read on and you will discover not only the “Why,” but insights on the “How,” the “When” and the “Where”—as well as times when it is not possible or appropriate to verbally tell others about Jesus Christ.

## Witness Encounters

Over the years, I have had thousands of witness encounters at various locations—beaches, sporting events, shopping centers, grocery stores, prisons, detention centers, military bases, schools, colleges, Indian reservations and leper colonies. I talk to people in the streets, housing projects, ghettos, workplaces, homes, hospitals, nursing homes; at airports and train stations; on planes, trains and buses; at dojos, gyms, holistic health stores, New Age centers and occult meetings; in large cities and remote villages.

It is always a privilege to share the claims of Jesus Christ and His awesome power as I travel across the U.S.—from Greenwich Village in New York to Venice Beach in California, from Bourbon Street in New Orleans to Haight and Ashbury Streets in San Francisco. I have also journeyed throughout the world proclaiming the name of Jesus—from Canada, Haiti, Africa, South America, Central America, India, the Himalayan Mountains, the West Indies and Europe to the Middle East and Asia.

I have shared the Gospel with Hindu priests, Buddhist monks, Jewish rabbis and Muslim clerics. I have witnessed to martial artists, athletes, coaches, fitness instructors, yogis, mediums, trance channelers, hypnotists, fortune tellers, witch doctors, witches, wizards, Wiccans, Satanists; psychics, New Agers, atheists, agnostics, scientists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, archaeologists, museum curators; teachers, principals, superintendents, professors, psychologists; and from politicians to street people. There isn’t anyone who is beyond my attention, including gang members, prisoners, prostitutes, gays and lesbians, the homeless, lepers, the sick and the dying, enlisted men and women and officers in every branch of the military—leading many to Christ.

I wrote this book for the purpose of drawing from these real-life witness encounters; not to spotlight my exploits, but to give you ideas on how to share your faith and lend insight concerning what to say or do and what not to say or do. You will discover, in the following pages, some dynamic biblical truths and the principles of why and how to share your faith. Sometimes, what I intended as a witness turned out to be an opportunity to encourage another Christian struggling in some area of life or overwhelmed by circumstances. It is equal joy to inspire other believers with biblical or personal accounts of God’s faithfulness, challenging them to remain faithful to Jesus Christ and God’s Word.

I will often employ different methods in sharing the Gospel, depending on

the person and situation. Some encounters have been prolonged, while others have been brief; perhaps a few comments or only a few words—even one word—or just a short question to make them think; sometimes about what I do or don't do and how I handle myself. Every day, in any way possible, I attempt to plant a seed, encourage, inspire and touch lives for Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that you will be motivated and energized to reach your world for Jesus Christ. May God's Spirit open your eyes and heart to see the many opportunities all around you to share the Gospel. May His Spirit empower you to be a courageous and effective witness for Him.

## The Essentials

We will need two important traits to be effective witnesses for Jesus Christ to those who may be hostile toward the Gospel or have distorted perspectives of Christianity: Love and Courage.

First, the people we share Christ with must know that we love them. We must look at each person as someone for whom Jesus Christ died: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The people I witness to may know I disagree with them and even oppose their beliefs and lifestyle, but I genuinely love them. If not, I would not be there talking with them about Jesus Christ.

Second, we must have courage. We must not be intimidated or fearful of going onto their turf or to their meetings to share our faith in Christ. They must know that we are not afraid because God has given us the courage to come into their space, possibly endangering ourselves, to offer them something so real and unequalled—the truth and power of Jesus Christ.

When I looked into the eyes of a voodoo witch doctor and put my hand on his chest, I felt compassion for him. That love shined through me even though I told him that Lucifer is not God, but the true God who created the heavens and the earth loves him; that Jesus Christ died on a cross for him, rose from the dead, and that he must receive Christ as Savior to have his name written in the Book of Life and to enter into God's eternal kingdom.

We must be willing to sacrifice virtually anything—our time, finances, and even our very lives for the Gospel—and be willing to face any obstacle, opposition, or ridicule to have the opportunity to share Christ with others.

## Conduct Yourselves with Wisdom

Paul admonished the Colossians to pray "that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also



been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak” (Colossians 4:3-4). He then encouraged them to:

Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person (Colossians 4:5-6).

We need to have a balance of zeal and wisdom to reach our world.

When I was a brand-new Christian, I had lots of zeal, but not much wisdom. Along with my girlfriend, I remember being in a car with one of my old buddies from the West Hill. Karen and I were just new Christians, so after sharing my testimony with him I said, “Jeff, do you want to become a Christian?” He replied, “I don’t think so.” So, I pulled out a knife and said, “Jeff, I am going to stab you. You are going to die and go to hell! Now do you want to become a Christian?”

Again, I had a lot of zeal but not too much wisdom.

## Opportunities

A chaplain called me needing ministry opportunities. I told him there were unlimited possibilities available to any believer wanting to reach out and touch lives. No healthy Christian should ever be bored with all the available opportunities to volunteer one’s time, assist others or coordinate one’s own outreach. Churches and ministries have many uses for those wanting to help with the needy and homeless or with ministries from children through seniors.

There are endless ideas concerning the ways and means of where and how to share the Gospel with people you meet and to witness for Jesus Christ such as on the streets, at shopping centers, grocery stores, assisted living and nursing homes, prisons, hospitals and doctor’s offices, sporting events and airports; on airplanes, with telemarketers, insurance agents and car salespersons.

Rise up and share your faith in Christ any way you can. Use your phone, letters, email, texts, blogs and other forms of media. Witness to telemarketers and anyone who will listen. If the coronavirus could so easily and quickly multiply to infect so many people, how much more can believers multiply their testimonies to impact an entire world for Jesus Christ. Begin today!

## Telling a Telemarketer

Telemarketing calls can be annoying! I often turn the call into a witness opportunity by saying, “Before I answer your question, let me tell you about the most important thing in my life which is my relationship with Jesus Christ.” Alternatively, “Let me first tell you about something amazing that happened and

how God spared my life in Santa Fe.” Some listen, some hang up. Yet, all hear Jesus’ name!

A vehicle warranty company called me more than 30 times over a period of several months to purchase a warranty for a vehicle I no longer owned. After repeatedly speaking to representatives explaining that we no longer own that vehicle or pressing “option 2” to be removed from their calling list or just hanging up, they continued to call. Finally, deciding to turn this into a witness opportunity, I pressed “1” to talk to a representative who spoke with an accent from another country. She asked the year and model of my vehicle. I replied, “Let me first tell you about the most important thing in my life which is my relationship with Jesus Christ. I hope you know Him too.” She politely asked again for the make and model of the vehicle, so I explained that I no longer owned that vehicle, have tried in vain to stop their calls and, from now on, will tell the callers about Jesus Christ. She respectfully thanked me and said she would have me removed from the list. Before hanging up, she said, “God bless you!” These are just people trying to make a living, so I treat them with respect and attempt to turn it into a witness opportunity.

On another occasion, a telemarketer called trying to convince me to switch to her long-distance company. I almost told her I was not interested, but instead politely listened for a few minutes. During the conversation, she said it would “be kosher” if I did so. I asked, “Are you Jewish?” When she said yes, we were off in another direction in our conversation. I explained to her that I spent a lot of time in Israel researching evidence for the Jewish Messiah. We talked for almost an hour about who the Jewish Messiah is and how to know Him. Because she did not want to stop the conversation, we continued for a couple more hours! I explained that one of her Hebrew prophets stated—“You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

She called me back several times during the following months to carry on our discussion about Yeshua—even though I never changed my phone carrier. A mere call from a telemarketer turned into an exciting witness opportunity.

## God Bless You, Mister!

While ministering at the Presidio of Monterey, Karen and I walked from the military base down to the wharf on Monterey Bay. In one of the shops was a sampling of corn chips and various dips. A sign in front of one of the dips said, “Very Hot.” I tried it and quickly ran to the cooler and bought a small bottle of water for \$1.25.

A few minutes later, a skinny kid about 11 years old came in and began sampling all the dips. I said, “Hey kid, don’t try that one, it’s really hot!” He looked at me and said, “You’re looking at the toughest kid in the world!” So, I said, “Go for it, kid, but you better have a buck and a quarter in your pocket to buy some water.” He took a big dip into it and started chomping away. He

walked around the store smiling and saying, “No problem. No problem.” I was impressed. About 10 seconds later, he ran to the cooler to get some water. He couldn’t get the bottle open, so he ran over to me and pleaded, “Please give me some water!” I said, “Open your mouth, kid,” as I squirted his mouth full of water. He swallowed and said, “God bless you, mister. God bless you!”

A few minutes later as we were walking down the wharf, this boy was walking in the opposite direction with several adults. He was fanning his mouth and trying to explain that he had eaten something hot and needed some water to drink. I walked into the middle of the group and said, “Hey kid, open your mouth.” The adults looked at me like I was crazy and were even more bewildered as he opened his mouth and I squirted it full of water. He swallowed and said, “God bless you, mister. God bless you!” The adults all smiled.

Likewise, there is a world of spiritually thirsty people whose thirst can only be quenched with the living water, the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

John 7:37 says:

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”

Revelation 22:17 states:

The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

You and I have the opportunity and responsibility to share the amazing Gospel of Jesus Christ with spiritually thirsty people.

## A Few Questions

How many potential witness opportunities have you had in your lifetime? More than a hundred? Maybe a thousand? How many of those people did you share your faith in Christ with? How many times have you refrained from telling them about Jesus because you were afraid to offend them or be laughed at? How many of these people have since passed into eternity? Do you know their eternal destiny? What will they—or more importantly—what will the Lord say when you stand before Him?

## Evangelism Is Not an Option

Matthew 24:14 states: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the

whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Knowing that God’s high calling for the church is to reach the lost, all believers should intensify their efforts—both in witnessing and giving—to reach this world while we still have the opportunity.

Jesus said, concerning His own time of ministry on earth, “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). How much truer is this for us today? Time is short and, from all the prophetic indicators, His coming rapidly approaches. Our major focus should be on evangelism and missions.

Evangelism is really not an option for a believer; it is a mandate from God. It has been said that you are either a missionary or a mission field; either you are a witness for Jesus Christ or you need someone to witness to you.

## Biblical Balance

Many Christians today are diverting their time, talents and treasures from evangelism and missions to social activism. However, the biblical balance is both evangelism and service in Jesus’ name. If I give a bottle of water, food or clothes to someone in need, I do it in His name. We should care about people’s material and physical needs, but we must care even more about the condition of their souls. If you really believe the Bible and Jesus’ teachings, then you will be concerned about someone’s temporary circumstances but far more concerned about his or her eternal destiny.

As a people, we have good goals and intentions, but we get sidetracked, wasting too much time on secondary issues while the priorities God has called us to do are neglected. We squander valuable time and energy by majoring in nonessentials (mundane activities with no eternal value) and minoring in the real essentials (those of utmost importance). For instance, many people focus their time and energy into a “cause” but disregard their highest calling to reach the lost with the Gospel and make disciples of new believers. So, many Christians I know are dedicated to service projects (which is fine), but rarely, if ever, share their faith in Christ. Then, when an unsaved associate passes from this life, they regret having never witnessed to them or given them an opportunity to accept Christ. That is why in every circumstance I try, through both example and word, to share my faith in Jesus Christ. Biblically, evangelism is not an option; it should be our passion.

## In a Voodoo Village

Outside of a witch doctor’s hut in Haiti, a woman sounded agitated as I prepared to pray with all the people gathered in the middle of a voodoo village. She cried out in Creole, “You didn’t bring us food and clothing.” Knowing I had nothing material left to give (since we already had given away all the food and clothes

our team had), I responded through my interpreter, “If I give you food today, tomorrow you will be hungry again. If I give you clothes today, in a few months they will wear out and be tattered and torn, but what I came to give you today will last for all eternity. I offer you spiritual food that will satisfy you now and for all eternity.” She nodded in acknowledgement.

There were many people gathered by the hut, so we all made a big circle and prayed together. During my prayer, I glanced to see if this woman was participating. Her head was bowed and her eyes were closed—the thirst in her heart was greater than her need for food and clothes.

In these end times, may we have the heartbeat of the Lord; evangelism, missions and service in Jesus’ name. Be encouraged to use your time, talents and treasures to advance God’s Kingdom until the entire world hears the amazing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Challenging Students Overseas

My wife and I returned on our fifth trip to Germany, for military outreach, the day after Thanksgiving to spend the rest of November and the first nine days of December speaking on military bases and ministering to U.S. troops and their families. We also gave away hundreds of our books and audio messages to enlisted men, women and officers while participating in military ceremonies in France and in chapel services on two Army bases in Germany.

While in Germany, a teacher asked me to speak at an American high school on the military base on “World Religions and Cultural Experiences Around the World” for three 90-minute classes. Speaking on the topic of atheism, I asked the students how many of them thought it took faith to believe in God but believed evolution was a fact; some raised their hands. Then, I asked those students if they were there when the “Big Bang” happened. They got the point.

I explained that just as it takes faith to believe in a Creator, it takes faith to believe in evolution. However, after a lifetime of research, I am convinced it takes more faith to believe in evolution because the evidence overwhelmingly proves a Creator.

Following an overview of many of the world’s major religions and philosophies, I concluded by stating to the students, “I have gained great insight from my research and have respect for those of different beliefs, but my search has led me to conclude that there is only One to whom I will bow my knee and trust my eternal destiny.” Then, I ended my lecture and opened for questions. Of course, they wanted to know who that One was. I looked at the teacher, and she said, “They asked” so I told them—Jesus Christ.

Those lectures touched the lives of many students as indicated in the email messages received. The teacher at the American high school in Germany sent the following email to the colonel and his wife who sponsored me:

You won't BELIEVE how powerfully Bill's presentation has affected my kids! They are coming to me in droves to tell me how inspired they are, how interesting he was, and how they've got lots to think about. I am so excited.

An email to Karen several months later from this teacher stated:

Hi Karen. Lives were touched and continue to be so since Bill spoke to my students. Several are still asking questions, commenting about the "challenge" he gave them (to spend time alone deciding just what it is they believe). Please send along my thanks for his willingness to spend time with some very lost souls in my classes; such beautiful, delightful children with stories that would stun most people. Two months later: Your visit continues to be a blessing to my students and me.

An email from the colonel's wife stated:

Karen, Thanks for coming. It was a blessing. A 13-year-old girl at the evening Chapel service really enjoyed hearing Bill speak and is planning to share her faith with friends at school.

## School Assemblies

Most public schools do not want Jesus, God or the Bible mentioned. During school assemblies and in the classroom, I respect their guidelines and speak on topics that will motivate students to prevent poor choices, destructive behavior, bullying and using drugs or alcohol. I share illustrations and do demonstrations to inspire them to develop courage, determination and self-control—all biblical principles of how we should live.

Sometimes, students, teachers or principals want to know more. Other times—maybe even years later—the opportunity arises to share with them about the One who changed my life and inspired the convictions and principles by which I live, speak and write.

During self-defense classes in schools, I have a little more freedom to share highlights of my testimony and of God's protection in dangerous situations. Some schools have me speak at baccalaureates where I have even more freedom to share my testimony and biblical insights.

The Obstacle Course at our ministry center provides exceptional opportunities to train sports teams, military personnel and new recruits and various groups—all free of charge. Workouts on the obstacle course are interspersed with motivational and inspirational comments to challenge youth and adults to achieve their full potential. Many of the participants, as well as the

coaches and recruiting sergeants, are given a copy of my book *Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ*.

## Detention Center

Several times, when I have spoken at a large detention center for high school-aged youth from troubled backgrounds, I was able to share my testimony and even give an altar call. Things had changed, however, during my most recent time there, I was unable to share as freely as I had before. Shortly before speaking, I was told by a disgruntled staff member that they would not listen to me, and that they always talk during assemblies. I replied, “They will listen.”

I opened with a strong illustration on courage and strength. They listened intently to both me and the motivational media assembly that followed. We did two assemblies that night, and the students were focused and receptive—the feedback was excellent.

After the second assembly, a group home leader came up to me and asked, “You are a Christian, aren’t you?” I said, “Yes.” He excitedly said, “I knew it! I am going back to my home group to talk about your assembly and share the Lord with them.”

## The Eternal Difference

Joshua witnessed to a 14-year-old girl who attended a school for youth in trouble where he taught. He gave her a copy of my book, *Who Is This Jesus?* Later, he noticed her sitting down outside reading it. We hope that she came to know the One she was reading about because a day later, she was dead—a 19-year-old male was charged with rape of a substantially impaired minor. Police said the circumstances and scene were suspicious.

I was given a tremendous opportunity to speak to all the young women at this school—many hardened from a life of rebellion. They were enthralled by my message, and I trust that God touched many of their lives.

A few hours later, I addressed the young men. After sharing my testimony and message on “Reaching Your Maximum Potential” to this audience of tough high school students, a strong young man, who had listened intently, came up to me and said: “I have one question concerning all that you have gone through and given up to follow Jesus Christ. Was it worth it?” I assured him that it most definitely was. He smiled and turned to walk away as he said, “That is all I needed to know.” By the look on his face and the glimmer in his eyes, I am certain he is daring to be different and is making his life count for Christ!

You never know how much time the person you share Jesus with, or to whom you feel led to give a tract or book to, has left in this world. Being sensitive to, and obeying, what the Lord impresses on your heart can make an

eternal difference.

## Mass Evangelism

Jesus believed in mass evangelism, speaking often to large crowds. In John 2:23, Jesus launched His miracle ministry in Jerusalem at the Passover—the largest festival of the Jewish year.

I believe in mass evangelism. That is why I am on radio, speak throughout the U.S. and abroad, have a website, write books, produce audio messages and have freely distributed over 2 million books and other biblical resources to spiritually hungry people in over 155 countries to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel.

Realize, however, it is not merely about the fastest ways to reach people, but the most effective ways. That is, everything we do should be done with excellence.

## One-on-One (John 4)

The same God who believes in mass evangelism also believes in reaching people one at a time. In John chapter 4, Jesus passed through Samaria. He stopped to rest and get a drink at the well in Sychar. Jesus spent time talking to one woman at the well, who, in turn, was instrumental in many Samaritans coming to faith in Him as the Messiah. While I enjoy speaking to large audiences, I also love to meet people one-on-one or in small groups.

## Along for a Wild Ride—The Importance of Companions

The exciting ride in Southern California with my son-in-law of the California Highway Patrol taught me the biblical importance of ministering with companions as Paul did and also bearing one another's burdens. The day was filled with diverse circumstances such as car crashes, a hit-and-run collision, traffic violations, a vehicle impound, high-speed driving, weaving in and out of traffic up to 115 mph in pursuit of a speeder and responding to calls from dispatch.

I gained a greater respect for his job considering the potential dangers:

- Traffic whizzing by as he was stopped along the road watching for violators
- High-speed driving—a tire blowout would be fatal
- Occupants of vehicles that he pulled over could be armed and dangerous



One interesting occurrence happened as Clayton received a call that an officer needed back-up. Driving on the freeway at high speeds, we arrived to see a large, bizarre-looking person who had been unwilling to cooperate with a much smaller officer.

This person was about six feet tall, weighed over 200 pounds and resembled a cat. “Cat” had tattoos completely covering his face and arms. The tattoos on his arms resembled scales and those on his face created a cat-like appearance. He had contact lenses to make his eyes appear like cat eyes and had long, claw-like, multi-colored fingernails. What started out as an attempt to stop him for speeding almost resulted in a tragedy. Instead of pulling over, he continued to drive three miles and then pulled into the driveway of a friend’s house. The other officer was visibly shaken by his appearance and intimidating behavior. He was not sure whom or what he was dealing with. “Cat” started walking toward the other officer before we arrived. Twice the other officer commanded him to stop and get back in his car, but he continued walking toward him. When the officer started to unstrap his gun holster, “Cat” finally backed off. Once Clayton arrived as back-up, the potential crisis was averted.

This encounter reminded me that as biblical Christians we are to share one another’s burdens. The support from other believers when one is facing personal difficulties, spiritual warfare or ministering, is greatly needed and encouraging. It stands to reason that Jesus sent His twelve disciples and the seventy out in pairs (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1).

# Planting Seeds...



## ...of Salvation

As a rough 18-year-old hitchhiker, I was not very receptive to an Akron, Ohio, businessman giving me and my friend a ride and trying to tell us about Jesus. So, he wrote a note, put it in an envelope and handed it to me. He said to give it to some Benedictine monks near Albuquerque, New Mexico. I opened the note and it read, “These boys are deeply troubled. Please pray for their souls.” At least he tried to reach me! Days later, to get a free meal, we did visit those monks. Before I left, one of them gave me a tract entitled *The New Birth*, which planted the seed of salvation in my heart.

## ...among the Enemy

While ministering in Southern California one October, I had the opportunity to take some friends with me to do evangelism ministry at two of the leading New Age and occult centers in the country: Encinitas was a New Age, Eastern mystical and occult Mecca.

Ed, who had attended one of my speaking engagements, set up an impromptu outreach, speaking to occultists and then debating them on a college campus in Encinitas. However, no one showed up to accept that challenge, so two days before Halloween, Ed went with me to a Haunted Psychic Fair to pass out my audio messages and tracts. There, we had opportunities to share with Wiccans, wizards, trance channelers and many other occult practitioners.

On October 31st, Ed and I attended the Halloween celebration at the Self Realization Institute. Over 10,000 children and parents participated. The highlight was a special occult “blessing” for all the children. We passed out many of my books, audio messages and pamphlets; very few people turned them down. Then, as we were leaving, we met and shared with a very receptive wizard.

The Lord protected and empowered us as we went on the enemy’s turf to share the light of the Gospel with many occultists. We pray that seeds were planted, eyes were opened, hearts were changed and captives were set free.

## ...in the Moment

One day, I was having a conversation with Rob at his place of employment. A coworker revealed that Rob was living with one woman, but also had several girlfriends in other cities. I told him about a voodoo witch doctor I knew who had women in many different areas of Haiti with several children by them. Then, when he had become a believer in Jesus Christ, I counseled this former witch doctor to choose only one of the girlfriends as his wife, but support the others financially.

Rob said that he could never do that because his family “has always lived this way.” I informed him that God’s standard was to marry one woman and be faithful to her. He repeated that his family “has always lived the other way,” and he could not change.

I asked, “If you let a buddy of yours move into your house, could he do whatever he wants, or would he have to obey your rules? What would you do if he messed with your woman, or trashed your place?” Rob emphatically said that his buddy would have to live by his rules and standards, or he would throw him out.

“Your own words will be your judge” I quickly responded, “because God created this world and everything and everyone in it. He gave us standards to live by and we will one day stand before Him to give an account. He will respond to you, that just as you required those who lived in your house to honor your standards, so God expects you to honor His.”

Rob looked at me and the other man who was listening and said, “I am speechless! I am speechless!” I think that was the first time he was ever speechless. I believe the day will come when he gives his life to Christ and lives according to God’s standards, and not his own. It was only a few years later that, with a slight grin on his face, he informed me he was getting married.

## ...with Discernment

### “Don’t Witness to Me”

Malcom, an Orthodox Jew, was our guide during my first tour of the Holy Land. He told everyone in the group not to try to witness to him. So after I got to know him I asked if he would proofread my upcoming book, *Who Is This Jesus?* He graciously did. We have been friends ever since.

When I hosted my eighth Holy Land Adventure, he could not be my tour guide because he was fighting colon cancer. Although it was only days before his colon surgery, he came to meet me and my group at our hotel in Jerusalem. After eating together, we had an hour-long group meeting and special prayer with him for his upcoming surgery. One of the questions I asked him to address was why he did not accept Yeshua as the Jewish Messiah. His insightful comments were ones I have repeatedly heard from Jews: Yeshua did not bring peace and the dead

are not raised. I assured him that all the promises (not fulfilled at Yeshua's first coming as the suffering servant) made by God to the Jews in the Hebrew Scriptures will be fulfilled by Yeshua when He returns to usher in His millennial reign from Jerusalem. The dead will be raised and the earth will be filled with peace and the knowledge of the Lord.

Sheree, a messianic believer in Yeshua who accompanied me on this trip, shared her testimony. We then prayed for Malcom and his upcoming surgery in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and in the name of Yeshua.

I am convinced that one day Malcolm will receive Yeshua as his Jewish Messiah to experience the joy of his life. God opens awesome doors in amazing ways if we are receptive and willing to walk through them.

## Snowball Fight in Jerusalem

During one of our Holy Land Adventures in February, we experienced every type of weather while in Jerusalem, from extremely high winds to heavy rain, drizzle, hail, sleet, snow and beautiful sunshine! It had not snowed in Jerusalem for four years, but there we were, after a rare snowfall, overlooking the City of David from the roof of Caiaphas' house (site of the high priest's palace where Peter denied Jesus three times). When some boys down below started throwing snowballs at us, I, along with a few of the other guys in our group, began to fire back. Growing up throwing snowballs in Pennsylvania, I targeted their feet with great precision. Amazed at my accuracy, they ran for shelter behind parked cars. We battled back and forth for about five minutes until I said, "We must go now." Our group and all the boys were laughing and smiling as we waved goodbye.

Although we did not have the opportunity to share the Gospel with them, I am certain those Arab youth will never forget that some fun-loving Christian Americans took time to have a snowball fight with them. The departing smiles and friendly waves communicated what words could not adequately convey.

## ....through Current Events

As I was buying some nutrition supplements from a Jewish man, three people from an area church came in for a meeting with his wife. The woman of the group recognized me and said her church supports me as one of their missionaries. She mentioned to the Jewish man that when I sat at her table during a Bible quiz competition, I knew all the answers and said, "He knows everything."

During their meeting, this Jewish man said, "Tell me about the Middle East." For over an hour, I shared with him a historical, cultural and prophetic perspective of the Middle East conflict, the unfolding and final biblical scenario, and why Yeshua (Jesus) is the promised Messiah. At the close of our

conversation, I told him what Scripture tells us is coming. When these things begin to come to pass, then you will know that Yeshua is the promised Messiah. He listened intently throughout.

We have had several more such conversations. Perhaps he will meet one of the 144,000 Jewish believers mentioned in the book of Revelation who become powerful evangelists for Jesus Christ during the Tribulation.

## ....when Disgruntled

In between speaking engagements in Florida, I had a one-day window to make a two-hour trip to see my brother and his family in Sarasota. Disgruntled customers at the car rental were informed that although we had reservations, corporate employees had come the previous night and had taken the available cars for supposedly higher priorities. One woman and her daughter were quite upset because they had to be at a funeral in Miami and needed to leave within the hour to make it on time. I offered her a “God’s Promise” tract that our ministry produced and asked if I could pray for her and her daughter to which she eagerly agreed. My wife then suggested she go to another car rental located nearby. Thirty minutes later, she came by in a rental vehicle with her face beaming and thanked us before heading to Miami.

In the meantime, my wife and I waited for the only available car, which was having its windshield replaced. After waiting one hour for the glue to dry and then another 20 minutes for the inside to be cleaned, we got in the rental car only to discover its rear-view mirror had not been replaced. After waiting another 15 minutes, we were informed that no one there was able to repair it. The woman working the counter gave me a truck to rent at a discounted rate. She appreciated our patience so much that she wanted to come and hear me speak that weekend but was unable to because of her work schedule. She enthusiastically received the “God’s Promise” tract. She gave me her name and number to be notified of future engagements, which I gave to the people who were hosting us.

## ....in New Age Debate

While on a ministry trip to San Diego, Karen and I visited Millan, a friend who is a personal trainer and nutrition expert. Over the years, she has requested hundreds of my books to give to her clients and recognized us in her book *Vegetarian Delights*. Millan introduced us to a woman who was staying at her health retreat for a week-long detox fast. This woman had been in the New Age movement for over 28 years. Millan told her about some of the amazing things God has done in our lives, so she was eager to meet us.

After sharing some of the miraculous accounts (Santa Fe, car battery explosion, rain withheld, Rara in Haiti, Himalayas, saved by the gift of a soccer

ball and other times of protection by an apparently supernatural Being) which she had found so enthralling, she encouraged me to write a book documenting all the miracles I have witnessed.

We then discussed a few other issues. To convey the point that no one is sinless (as she supposed), and that all need a savior, I borrowed a technique used effectively by others and asked her if she ever lied, stole, taken God's name in vain or lusted. She acknowledged that she had done them all, to which I responded, "So much for sinlessness because according to the Bible that makes you a lying, thieving, blaspheming, adulteress." She understood my point about everyone needing a savior but commented that there are many saviors and many ways to God. I then explained why only Jesus had the credibility to be our Savior.

She replied that God was "unconditional love" and therefore would accept everyone—no matter whom or what they believe in. I countered that His unconditional love is so amazing that, if you are willing to accept His offer of salvation, He will unconditionally forgive anything you have ever done. She then said she could not believe God would send anyone to hell. I explained that she has a lifetime of choices to determine if she desires to have this severed relationship restored with the God who created her. If she chooses not to seek restoration in this lifetime, or if she chooses other gods, then He will merely give her what she wants and chose—for all eternity.

She then accused that Christians are dogmatic and put God in a box. I corrected her statement by saying that she is the one putting God in a box and limiting Him by deciding what she believes He has to be like. By contrast, I told her how I searched to know if there was a God, who He is and what He requires of me. Then, rather than trying to make Him in my image or determining who or what I thought He should be and what He should or should not require, I submitted to Him.

She seemed to really appreciate our discussion which resulted from merely sharing some of the many miracles I have experienced through faith in Jesus Christ. I hope the witness that I shared and the books and audio tapes she gladly received will one day be used to bring her to faith in Jesus Christ.

## ...with a Coat

While serving as a chaplain with the Red Cross during the California wildfires, I was given a coat at one of the shelters to keep me warm after the sun set and the temperature dropped. They told me to keep the coat. I usually give an item away when I buy or receive a similar one, so when I returned to Pennsylvania, I wanted to give away one of my winter coats.

I put a tract in the coat pocket and went down to a rough neighborhood in nearby Farrell about 11:00 p.m. on a weekend to find someone who needed it. I

was amazed how hard it was—on that cold night—to give away a warm winter coat! Every time I stopped my vehicle and got out to offer the coat to someone, they ran away.

Finally, a young man who looked like he really needed a coat accepted it. As I drove away, I prayed he would read the tract in the pocket and give his life to Christ. Maybe that tract planted a seed like the seed someone planted in my life when I was hitchhiking across the country at the age of 18.

## ....with a Tract

Not long ago, while traveling back to Pennsylvania, we stopped at a Virginia rest area. I picked up some change for the Salvation Army Christmas kettle and a tract for the worker. A man walked by as I was getting out of my vehicle, and I instantly knew the “God’s Promise” tract was for him. Handing it to him I said, “God wants you to have this.” He looked at it and immediately replied, “You don’t know how much I need this. I was in the hospital for three months with Covid and almost died. Now I have an aneurysm for which I must have surgery.” Before departing, he thanked me several times. After giving a donation and a tract to the woman at the Salvation Army Christmas kettle, I noticed that the man was sitting in his car reading the tract.

# Appearance Matters



I had been on a Western tour, speaking in Arizona and California, and was driving back home to Pennsylvania through Texas. I was heading to Bourbon Street in New Orleans to do some street ministry. I had let my beard grow and was wearing a T-shirt, jeans and a bandanna. I got lost in San Antonio and needed directions, so seeing a police cruiser outside a coffee shop, I went in and asked directions from the two policemen there. I thought they would be happy to help me, but I forgot how I appeared.

They looked at me, and I instantly felt the hostility that I had felt before I became a Christian (running around with bad guys and getting into trouble). Can you imagine me trying to convince those police officers: “I’m a minister; I went to four years of Bible college. I am a law-abiding citizen. Let me tell you about Jesus.” They already had a mental roadblock. We have to be careful we do not put up roadblocks.

I was dressed like that because I was heading to Bourbon Street to do street ministry. But remember: although God looks at the heart, what does man look at? The external appearance. We must take care that we do not turn people off by our appearance or behavior.

When I am witnessing to executives and business people, I do not dress like a street person, and when I am dealing with street people or gang members, I do not go in a suit. Be sure not to eat garlic or have bad breath before you witness because you won’t get past the first couple words.

## Identify with Them

Several years ago, the Rainbow Family was having their annual gathering at the Allegheny Forest, an expansive national park in the mountains of central Pennsylvania. I put on my hippie garb—a tie-dyed shirt and bandanna—and fit right in. One of my staff and I spent most of the day witnessing and passing out my books and pamphlets among the 20,000 people who were involved in a smorgasbord of New Age beliefs, Eastern mysticism, occultism and American Indian religions. Many were also using drugs and alcohol but most were very friendly and receptive. I recorded an amazing “miracle” during this event in my



personal journal and my book entitled *The Impossible*.

On a speaking engagement in Trinidad, I would use my free time to go out into the streets near Maudie's Guest House where I was staying and pass out our pamphlets and books. I often did it in bare feet, since many of the people didn't wear shoes. The people stared at this "crazy" American, walking down their street with no shoes, passing out pamphlets and books and sharing Christ, but they responded very favorably. Of all the scores of pamphlets and books we passed out doing street ministry, not one person turned them down.

In many different places such as a weight room at a youth detention center, the outdoor weightlifting platform and gymnastic apparatus area at Muscle Beach, or in a makeshift gym in a garage in Trinidad, I often lift some weights with people or teach them a few self-defense moves. This gives me credibility and a greater opportunity before I share my faith with them or speak at an event in their area.

When they realize that what I am saying about exercise, nutrition or self-defense is true, they are more receptive to hear and believe that what I am sharing about Jesus Christ is also true.

## Fools for Christ

There is an old teaching that still surfaces occasionally. Some people take 1 Corinthians 4:10 concerning being "fools for Christ" out of context. They purposely do foolish things thinking it will bring glory to Jesus Christ. This is unscriptural nonsense!

A couple I knew joined a group in Florida called the Hallelujah House. One of their many extreme teachings was to literally be fools for Christ (obviously twisting and distorting Paul's meaning in 1 Corinthians 4:10). They purposely became obnoxious and harassing in their witnessing. At midnight, they would turn their Christian music up full blast to witness to their neighbors. When the police told them to turn the music down, they cried "harassment" and quoted 2 Timothy 3:12, "...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

While visiting a church in Toronto, one pastor's wife said, "If Jesus wants me to howl for Him, I will howl for Him"—which she did. Several pastors and their wives said if the Holy Spirit wants us to writhe like snakes or roar like lions, we will do it—and they did. They neglected to understand that this was more in line with occultism than Scripture and the foundation of their belief system was twisted far out of biblical context.

# Reach People Where They Are



**W**e must reach people where they are. God did not stay in Heaven and write across the sky. He became incarnate and dwelt among us.

The apostle Paul went into synagogues on the Sabbath and reasoned with the Jews from the Hebrew Scriptures. He also went to the marketplaces to reach Gentiles. Even from his prison cell, he was writing letters to the churches to touch more people and instruct believers.

## Where the Fish Are

Fishermen do not wait for the fish to come to them, they go to the lakes, streams, rivers and oceans where the fish are. As Christians, we are “fishers of men” and must go to the streets, nursing homes, hospitals, prisons and places where the needy, hurting and dying are.

We must “go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in” (Luke 14:23). Invite them to a special outreach, have them over for dinner, give them a book or tract...the list goes on and on.

Most evangelism happens outside the church.

## It All Began with a Question

Responding to questions people had concerning my newfound faith in Jesus Christ and how my life was so dramatically changed led to the writing of numerous pamphlets, tracts and books, and the production of audio messages and videos on a variety of topics. They are geared to reach as many people as possible and challenge believers to reach their maximum potential in Christ. Through our ministry’s World Literature Outreach, over two million of our biblical resources have been given to missionaries, pastors, chaplains, military personnel, students of all ages, prisoners, to searching people of every state in the U.S. and more than 155 countries.

An ever-growing number of lending libraries—on the mission field, behind prison walls, on military bases, in churches, ministries, camps, orphanages,

schools, colleges and seminaries—offer our biblical materials. Recipients of our books, pamphlets and audio messages agree to share them with family members, friends and others—thereby multiplying the message many times.

Letters we have received from pastors and missionaries tell how each of our audio messages was heard by more than 100 people as it was played in homes, schools, Sunday School classes, youth meetings, Bible studies and church services. Considering the tens of thousands of audio messages we have distributed (and the countless ones duplicated by various churches and ministries), many people have heard the messages. Our books are also made available to the congregations and villages as requested. Each book is shared with many other people—oftentimes until they are worn out. We have received similar reports from prisoners, military personnel and others regarding our books.

Many of our articles and ministry ideas, and excerpts from our books and messages have been published in various magazines, journals, newsletters and books. They are posted on websites and blogs, touching even more lives. Several of our books, including my testimony, have been translated into other languages and reprinted by publishers and ministries in other countries.

## Touching a Life

I keep my books and tracts readily available, so after witnessing to someone, I can offer material for further clarification on the topic(s) we were discussing. Most people graciously receive them.

Another simple way we touch a life with a book is Karen enclosing one as a gift whenever she sells something over the internet. In addition, giving, lending or recommending certain Christian movies that have relevant and powerful messages is an easy and effective way to touch their lives and families.

## On Their Turf

Jesus' Great Commission for believers may sometimes resemble an invasion mission into the enemy's turf. We as believers in Jesus Christ are to take the light of the Gospel and glory of Christ into enemy territory to the unbelieving whose minds the god of this world has blinded (2 Corinthians 4:4).

On mission trips, I go into the villages, jungles, leper colonies and hospitals to reach people on their turf—many times where no missionary has ever been before.

In my travels, I often go to fitness centers, martial art dojos, psychic fairs, health expos and so on. I usually bring some of my pamphlets and books to give to people I meet. I also like to do street ministry and usually have bags of food, water and clothes with pamphlets tucked inside for homeless people living on the

streets, in the parks, at the beach or panhandling for money.

I love to get those who act tough into an isolated setting and talk to them one-on-one about the Lord and eternity because, when they're all alone, they usually are not so menacing. I find that when you are dealing with people who are rough (gang members, martial artists, weightlifters, athletes, those in Special Forces), it is sometimes difficult to witness to them in a group; they have an image to maintain. When I get them without others, they are usually much more receptive.

## Redirected in the Himalayas

After great response from speaking at a convention in the Himalayas, I traveled 2,500 kilometers by jeep to remote places rarely, if ever, visited by white missionaries. I love to reach the unreached. It may have been easier to go to southern India where there are many more Christians, and speak to much larger audiences, but I felt led by the Lord to go to unreached people and those who may have never heard the Gospel.

## In Nigeria

After appearing on national television and speaking at conferences in Nigeria, I wanted to go into the villages for street ministry (which I love to do when I am not speaking). The bishop who sponsored me did not want me to leave the complex because of potential dangers, but I assured him I would be fine. As I approached a nearby village, I saw a thin, elderly man standing by what appeared to be the remains of a broken-down city gate. While walking into the village, I acknowledged him with a friendly greeting, to which he nodded back. Later, someone told me he was the chief of that village and could have prevented me from entering.

Most of the people I met had never seen blue eyes before. Several young children began to follow me. At first there were three, then ten. Soon there were 25. One of the older boys let me ride his bicycle. It was unlike any bike I had ridden before. The steering was erratic, and I was unable to control its direction. Kids were laughing and scattering in every direction, running into the jungle to avoid being hit. After a few minutes of this "thrill ride," I thanked him for allowing me to use his bicycle, then continued walking. By the time I got back to the mission compound, there were 70 children, mostly boys, following me. I sent for one of the Nigerian pastors who came out and spoke to them in their native language. They listened intently.

Following that 20-minute message, they all raised their hands to accept Christ. Did every one of them really receive Christ as Savior? Probably not; however, some did and all of them had the seeds of salvation planted in their hearts.

Because I respectfully acknowledged that village chief, he allowed me to move freely about the village. In the same way, those who accept Christ as their Savior and Lord will gain access to His eternal Kingdom.

## In Haiti

In Haiti, when I took my ministry team into a village, we would start singing. Twenty-five to fifty people would usually gather and someone from our group would share a brief testimony, followed by a short message given by a team member or myself. We would then hold hands in a big circle and pray with all the Haitians who had gathered. Following prayer, we would go to the huts of those who requested special prayer. In one week alone, we ministered in 20 villages. The mission director said we had done something (going into the villages on our own) that no other group had done in the 25 years of their mission in Haiti. Soon thereafter, other groups began to follow our example.

In one village, some men were cutting up coconuts with machetes. They seemed agitated we were there but soon joined the circle and prayed with us. When we were done, they climbed a coconut tree and threw down about ten coconuts. They cut small holes in the coconuts and served us coconut milk. After we drank the coconut milk, they cut the “meat” out for us to eat, and I asked what I could give them in return. In Creole, they said, “Nothing! We are just so happy you have come to be with us at such a dangerous time as this in Haiti!” I told them that when I returned to Haiti, I would come back to see them—which I did. They were equally as grateful to see us again, as they were on our first visit.

## The Answer to Someone’s Prayer

Your verbal witness may be the answer to someone’s prayer. Perhaps one of their parents or grandparents has been praying for a loved one to come to Christ; perhaps someone’s dying prayer was for God to send someone to reach their unsaved loved one. That is just what happened when we stopped and visited a witch doctor in a remote village: his Christian mother-in-law took me to the side and said she had been praying for him for years. She rejoiced that he was finally listening to the Gospel.

## Ocean Beach

Due to the moderate climate year-round, San Diego has been called the “Bum Capital of the World” because so many people live on the streets and at the beach. I befriended a man at Ocean Beach named Johnny Nasty, giving him some clothes, food and pamphlets. He told me that if I had any problems with anyone at Ocean Beach to tell them I knew Johnny Nasty. A few days later, I saw him again and gave him another pamphlet. Because he said he had read my

“Searching” pamphlet twice that morning—and that it was excellent—the other guys with him enthusiastically took copies of my other pamphlets. A few years later while doing street ministry at Ocean Beach, I learned that Johnny Nasty had been murdered. I expect to meet him in Heaven one day.

On another occasion while doing street ministry at Ocean Beach, I gave a “Searching” pamphlet to a very receptive young man. As we talked, I asked him where he was from. He told me he was from the Northeast. I asked where in the Northeast; he said Pennsylvania.

I asked him where in Pennsylvania; he replied, “Near Pittsburgh.” So, I asked him which city near Pittsburgh; he said, “Sharon.” I showed him the address on the back of my pamphlet. When he saw “Sharon,” he was elated that we were both from the same hometown, so we talked for a while. The Lord had sent me across the country to reach someone from my own home city.

Again, at Ocean Beach I met a man named Tom who was about 60 years old and had been living on the street. During our ensuing discussion, I gave him some pamphlets, a blanket and a mat to sleep on. A few months later he wrote to the ministry to say thanks and requested more literature.

## Losing Twice

Many people ask me why I care or make the effort to reach these people. I have a burden for them. Some of the homeless I meet are reaping what they sowed from bad choices they made; some are victims of circumstances that were out of their control. Either way they have wasted part of their lives. If they are not reached with the Gospel, they will lose the next life too. That is why I love to share Christ and give my books and pamphlets to those who are down and out. Although their circumstances may seem hopeless, I can assure them of a great hope—eternal life through Jesus Christ. Those who come to faith in Christ can have their lives and circumstances changed as they get involved in local churches or ministries.

## New Age—Old Regression

My wife, Karen, and I attended a two-week session at a health institute in California. We knew the class, Conscious Breathing, was going to be tainted with New Age techniques and beliefs, so Karen decided not to go. I looked at it as a research and witness opportunity. The instructor of this deep breathing class began by requesting everyone to close their eyes and hum a tone while punching the air to set the mood. Through “toning,” practitioners learn to build up vibrations within the body as they hum and chant. The mystical connotations of sound, deep breathing, visualization, meditation and energy flow were intended by the instructor to find application in holistic health treatment.

When I was the only one not participating, the instructor stopped the session and announced that everyone must participate. The toning and punching

the air resumed but was abruptly stopped as the instructor asked if I was going to participate. With all eyes glaring at me, I told her that I would only do the breathing part. The instructor talked to me during a break, and I explained to her that it would be like her going to a fast food restaurant. She would have to be very selective in the choices she made so as not to violate her convictions. Besides, it would be a regression for her to consume what she believed to be inferior and potentially harmful food. I explained to her that in my spiritual walk, this is a regression.

The session resumed with about twenty-five people punching and dancing wildly while chanting tones, deep breathing and saying positive affirmations. An audio tape played for ninety minutes with music, toning and such affirmations as: “You are beautiful,” “You are whole,” “You are divine” and “We are all children of God.” While toning, deep breathing and listening to the positive affirmations, participants were also told to visualize different colors as they visualized energy moving through the chakras.

During the session, the instructor twice invoked the gods of all who were there and did an invocation for the masters of wisdom, inner guide or whatever you believe the “mystery” to be. I felt like Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon. I was in an occult environment and inundated with their belief system. I responded in my mind to each affirmation with a biblical response. Now, I would not recommend any believer do what I did, but I prayed before attending this class and believed the Lord wanted me to see the influence many Christians are falling under, and submitting to, so that I could both warn them and assure them of the superior power of God’s Spirit and Word.

Immediately following the session, several people came up to me and wanted to know why I would not participate. They listened intently for almost an hour as I shared my testimony of coming to know Jesus Christ and what He has done in my life. I then gave them copies of my books *Spiritual Warfare* and *Victory in Christ* and *Who Is This Jesus?* for further explanation. A Jewish woman, who also asked me why I would not participate, listened intently as I shared how I searched for and found the Jewish Messiah and what her Hebrew Bible teaches concerning such occult involvement. She graciously received a copy of *Who Is This Jesus?*

Many of the people attending this session were professing Christians indulging in all the New Age revelry. Others were seekers looking for new spiritual light and experiences or those hostile to Jesus Christ and offended by anything Christian.

As true believers in Jesus Christ living in a growing pagan society, we must be light in the midst of darkness and salt that has not become tasteless without compromising our biblical convictions. Having this “balance” may be a challenge these days, but it is crucial.

## Separation, Not Isolation

We are to be separated from the sins of the world as Jesus was but not isolated from the sinners. God intends for us to be witnesses in this world.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11: “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.”

We are not to stop having contact with the unsaved in this world—how else can we reach them? But, we do not participate in activities that compromise our commitment to Christ and His Word. However, we should not associate with professing believers who unrepentantly persist in willful sin.

## A Muslim, a Hindu and a Backslidden Christian

The church where I was to speak in Trinidad was right in the midst of Hindus, Muslims and Spiritual Baptists (“Christianized” form of spiritualism). I went into a bar to witness and ended up with a Muslim on one side, a Hindu next to him and a backslidden Christian on the other side of me.

After sharing with them, they accepted the pamphlets and books I offered. The Hindu liked me so well he would not let me leave until I let him buy me a drink. After explaining that I gave up alcohol after giving my life to Jesus Christ, he finally settled for buying me a Coke.

## Non-Christians

When I am dealing with Christians involved in immorality or false teachings, my rebuke is strong according to what God’s Word says.

However, when I am dealing with non-Christians, I usually do not condemn their alcohol or drug use, immorality, occultism and so on. I share the wisdom of giving one’s life to Jesus Christ and the superior power we have through Him. We must first lead a nonbeliever to Jesus Christ who can open their spiritual eyes and give them discernment.

## Gangs, Marines and Gays

Mike, a friend from California, was to accompany me to Haiti later that month on a mission trip, so I was doing some preliminary training with him in Oceanside, California. It was close to midnight when we went into some rough areas where there were many gangs, homeless and a high presence of military recruits from



nearby bases. I had brought several of my audio tapes such as “Courage to Stand Alone,” “Self-Control—the Essence of Strength” and “The Taming of Godzilla” along with my “Searching” pamphlets and “Peer Pressure” booklets. I approached many gang members and offered them an audio tape or booklet. Each one received them with thanks.

At one corner, about 10 Marines were waiting for a bus. I told them that I minister at military bases throughout the U.S. and abroad as I offered them some audio tapes and pamphlets. They were very receptive. One Marine said he had become a Christian about a year ago and was studying apologetics and evidence for the faith. He wanted to know if we had more material that he could have, and I was quick to oblige.

After sharing for about ten minutes with the Marines, Mike and I moved to another place in front of a gay bar. I was able to start a conversation with one young man who, as he rejected the audio tape, proclaimed, “I am gay and an atheist!” I replied, “I am not concerned about your sexual preference.” The young man’s response was “Wow! You are the first religious person to make that comment.” I said, “First, I want you to come to know the Creator. Look into the sky and consider that there are billions of stars in billions of galaxies. Also, consider your DNA, and you can begin to realize how complex the universe and our bodies are. This did not happen by random chance. An intelligent Designer created us.”

I continued, “God says in the Bible that if you search for Me with all your heart, you will find Me. My main concern right now is to challenge you to search for the evidence of the God who created you. Coming to know Him will lead you to Jesus Christ. Then, by His Word and Spirit, He will deal with the other issues in your life.” As we parted, the young man seemed visibly touched by what and how I shared, though he still refused an audio tape or book.

## A Pendulum Swing

On that same busy night, I was also able to share with a group of Air Force personnel at Oceanside. Imagine 20 or so military men in front of a bar around midnight—drunk. I had some audio tapes on “Self Control—the Essence of Strength,” and as I waded into the middle of the group to talk with them, one guy said, “Yeah, yeah, I believe in Jesus.” He took the audio tape from my hand and put it into his pocket. This man told me his wife was at home pregnant—while he was there drunk, partying with his buddies and looking for women.

Several different factions were standing outside the bar, tempers were rising; it looked like a fight was about to break out. Despite the hostility, Mike and I stayed and shared for several more minutes with them. One has to wonder about that fellow whose wife was pregnant. My comment to Mike was, “He will wake up tomorrow morning with a hangover, reach into his pocket, pull out an audio tape and wonder where it came from. He will see the title, Self-

Control—the Essence of Strength. As he listens to that tape—and I am sure he will—he will hear how the essence of true strength is having self-control over alcohol, fighting and illicit sexual desires. Hopefully, the Holy Spirit will use it to convict him and truly bring him to Jesus.”

The evening was not over yet! Deep in the heart of the California night, Mike and I were able to continue our ministry, this time to the homeless. One man was apparently out of food and hungry. I walked back to my car and got some carrots and other food items I had brought from my daughter’s house to snack on. The man told me upon my return, “I was giving up on you coming back.” I replied, “Just as I promised to return and kept my word, one day, Jesus will return as He promised.” Mike and I also had a chance to provide some clothing and share the Lord with him. As he munched on the carrots, he thanked us and was very sincere as Mike prayed with him.

## Relating

To reach people where they are, we must reach them in ways they can relate to. With some, you can relate almost instantly while, with others, it may take months, years or even a lifetime to develop a necessary relationship of trust before you have the opportunity to share Jesus Christ and the Bible. Some people will watch your lifestyle to see if your faith is genuine before listening to what you have to say.

The apostle Paul said: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel...” (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Before I spoke at an Iranian center in London, I was informed not to mention Israel or that I am an American. I complied and shared a strong biblical message on “Overcoming Giants and God’s Boot Camp” to a large and receptive audience. The response and comments after were excellent. We must be sensitive to the culture and customs of others, without compromising our commitment to Jesus Christ and while staying in the bounds of God’s Word.

My message never changes; it is always that Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected. However, my method is adapted to the person or group with whom I am dealing.

I used to like to fight before I became a Christian—almost anyone, anywhere and in any circumstance. I still love a challenge, but now my desire is

that in any situation and with any kind of person—no matter their background and beliefs—whether they are a street person or a politician, an athlete or an archaeologist, I may relate the Gospel in a manner they can understand.

I like to find common ground, learn their interests, discover their belief system and then using their background and interests, present the claims and uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

## Excited about Witch Doctor

I went into a health co-op in Erie where many employees are into a variety of New Age beliefs and practices. I always try to find some kind of common ground, so I said while checking out, “I just got back from Haiti and I was with a witch doctor.” They got excited and said, “Wow! That is fantastic! What did he teach you?” (They were hoping I would share some voodoo secrets.) I replied, “Actually, he did not teach me anything, but I did lead him to Jesus Christ.” “Oh my god!” the girl at the cash register blurted out, as she, and the others listening, manifested visible panic.

After they calmed down, I had a chance to witness in more detail as to how the witch doctor came to accept Jesus Christ. I think they were still in shock, but they listened politely.

## Events in Jerusalem Impact New Ager

On another occasion, following a speaking engagement to some very receptive college students, Karen and I went to that same close by health co-op. One of the employees, who is opposed to any kind of organized religion, heard me say that I had recently returned from speaking in Jerusalem. She said to me, “I can’t believe what is going on over there with Jews, Christians and Muslims [the three monotheistic major world religions], all fighting over the city of Jerusalem.” I agreed with her that it is sad indeed that there is so much fighting in the city of peace but replied that true Christians would not be murdering people because Jesus taught His followers to love their enemies.

I then asked her, “Isn’t it amazing that what is occurring in Jerusalem was foretold by the ancient prophecies in the Bible?” She waited for my explanation, so I said, “In AD 70, the people of the nation of Israel were dispersed throughout the world when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple. Scripture foretold thousands of years ago that Israel would be restored as a nation and that before Christ returns, world events would focus on Jerusalem and the tiny nation of Israel.”

Still listening intently, I shared with her several amazing Bible prophecies now having the potential for fulfillment: the armies of the world surrounding Jerusalem; the Jewish Temple being rebuilt; the Antichrist’s desecration of the

Temple, and people not being able to buy or sell without his mark on the right hand or forehead.

Hearing all these things from the Scriptures seemed to enthrall her, and she kept asking questions. I told her that this Bible is so amazingly accurate that we know a personal God inspired it—it could not have been written by mere humans.

She accompanied me to my car where I gave her copies of my books, *The Last Days* and *Who is This Jesus?* Her parting words were, “You ought to talk to my husband. I think you are the only one who might be able to reach him and help him have faith.”

## Giving Up on God

A nurse from Wisconsin called and said, “Bill, I was giving up on God. I was done because I thought all Christians were fake. I went into a Goodwill store, and someone must have given them your

*Beware: Deception and Delusion in the Church* book to get it into someone else’s hands. There was a price on it of 11 cents, so I bought that book and began to read it. She continued, “Now I would not sell it for \$1,000.”

What took very little effort on the part of the person who donated my book to Goodwill, resulted in a changed life for the person who bought it.

## The Market

While waiting on Karen to pick up a prescription, I noticed an older woman confidently loading cases of Boost into her shopping cart. When I offered to help, she stopped and told me she was having surgery for carpal tunnel in a few days and was terrorized because she is the caregiver for her husband. I introduced Karen to Dorothy who gave us a laundry list of her husband’s ailments. I told her that her only hope, through all she is facing, is Jesus Christ. Karen asked if she could pray for her, to which she readily agreed. So, in Giant Eagle, we had a brief prayer meeting. She could not have been more grateful and said that God sent us to her to encourage her.

This woman appeared strong and confident outwardly yet was facing so many unseen hardships. It was as if the candle of faith in her life that had nearly gone out was rekindled as she realized God sent us during her time of fear and suffering. An encouraging word of hope and a brief prayer can make an eternal difference.

## From Stealing to Faith

A postal worker in Trinidad wrote to confess he had stolen one of our packages

sent to someone else. He took it home and listened to the audio tape and read the book. He gave his life to Jesus Christ and wrote to confess his sin and request more literature to help him grow in his faith.

## Saint Peter's Gate

Oftentimes I am called upon to visit people who have only days, sometimes just hours, left to live. Many of them have a nominal church background but no assurance of salvation. To prepare them for eternity by making God's offer of salvation understandable, I sometimes use metaphoric language such as, "What will you say when you meet Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates and he asks you, 'Why should I let you into Heaven?' If you reply, 'Because I went to church or was baptized or lived a good life or was a good person' he will turn you away from entering the presence of a holy and righteous God. But if you can sincerely say, 'I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. Jesus shed His blood and sacrificed His life that I might be forgiven and become a child of God.' Then Saint Peter will say, 'Welcome home! Come on into Heaven!'"

# What Exactly Does That Mean?



## Being Understood

I try to use terminology that can be easily understood. For example, I do not say, “You have to be justified and sanctified,” because most people do not understand those terms.

I also need to correctly interpret their terminology. If I say, “You must be born again,” to a New Ager, she will say, “Right on! I am born again”—meaning she has been reincarnated. Or if I say, “Jesus is God,” to a Hindu, he will agree but then respond, “So are you and I gods.”

Therefore, it is important they understand what you are saying and you understand what they mean so that you are communicating accurately and effectively.

## An Illustration

When my son BJ was five years old, he asked me, “Remember when you hypnotized Grandpa and Tabitha?” In an attempt to clarify what he meant, I asked, “When?” BJ said, “Last summer.”

So I asked, “What do you mean by hypnotized?” He replied, “Just forget it.” “No,” I responded, “What do you mean by hypnotized?” He replied, “Well, remember when you put them under the water?” I said, “Oh, you mean when I baptized them in Banjak’s pool!”

Don’t be afraid to ask, “What do you mean by that?” or “Give me an example.” Be sure you understand what they are saying and make clear to others what you want to communicate.

## Using Discernment

Dr. BJ Rudge shares some crucial insight in the following two paragraphs about the importance of defining terms—especially regarding Jesus:

As individuals, we must be as discerning as the Bereans in

understanding the meaning behind words that people use. Let me explain. I opened my door to two individuals who greeted me with a smile. They said they were Christians and believed in Jesus. However, after asking them a few questions, it became apparent we did not believe in the same Jesus. While I recognize Jesus as the eternal Son of God (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17), they saw him only as a created being. On another occasion, a man walked into my office claiming to believe in Jesus, but after several minutes, I learned that his Jesus is simply an enlightened individual and not the Son of God and Savior of the world (Luke 2:10-11; John 3:16-17).

Define terms so you understand what the other person is saying and communicate your faith clearly. Know what you believe, so you do not find yourself—like the Corinthians—being deceived by a different gospel (2 Corinthians 11:3-4).

## Cousin Grace

For forty-three years, my mother's cousin, Grace, had been a member of Christian Science (popular designation for the Church of Christ, Scientist), although she claimed to be a Christian. For ten years, we witnessed to her. As new Christians, we often came on too strong, which proved ineffective, and sometimes offensive. However, over the years of dealing with unbiblical teachings, we learned much and gained wisdom in sharing Christ. As we sat together one day, instead of calling Grace's group a cult, I asked her if we could study the Bible together. I said, "Since we both believe we are Christians let's examine Scripture concerning who Jesus is and also evaluate Scripture on the topic of salvation." She agreed.

As I shared Scriptures concerning the deity of Christ and salvation through faith, she began to ask questions. I explained how various cults (never insinuating her group was a cult) have extra-biblical teachings and distort the deity of Christ and His plan of salvation. Her eyes lit up as she questioned if Christian Science did this. I asked her, "Do they?" To which she replied, "Yes." Grace committed her life to the Jesus Christ of the Bible and received His free gift of grace.

I encouraged Grace to get into Bible studies to answer her many questions. We got her a Bible study series, and she started attending church at her apartment complex in Youngstown. Each week, she changed more and more.

Grace was close with the Christian Science people who had helped her in many ways. They tried to get her back, but she refused. Although difficult to leave, she began to break all ties. Two of her friends also left Christian Science and became Christians. Grace read my article "What Is a Christian?" and got copies for all her friends. She also sent one with her letter of resignation to the Christian Science mother church in Boston. She then had all their literature removed from her home.

She asked me to have her buried instead of being cremated, since the Christian Science church cremates. To them, sin, disease and death are illusions. When Grace died, I fulfilled my promise, and we were able to bury her with the generosity of a funeral home.

## Communication 101

Jim Weikal, a friend and colleague who has served as Biblical Instruction Director at my ministry for many years, provides insight concerning the importance of using terms and illustrations the person we are witnessing to will understand:

I arrived at church on a cloudy spring morning and saw a parked van in the church lot. There was nothing unusual in this, but I couldn't see through the darkly tinted window and decided that no one was there. As I got out of my car and walked back toward the trunk, a young woman exited the stationary vehicle and walked purposefully across the blacktop towards me.

She identified herself, and we began to talk. As I usually do on these occasions, I turned the discussion to spiritual matters. She was not raised in the church and had little understanding of salvation through Christ's death and resurrection.

As I have learned over the years, Christians might assume that everybody understands terms like "saved," "repent," "sin," "savior" when, actually, not everybody does. So, I did my best to define these terms and use common illustrations that could be easily understood. She was tearfully moved by what I shared, and said she was looking for the peace that I had described. I invited her to come to church. She gave me a hug, and then returned to her car.

I stepped into the church and got Bill's book *Who Is This Jesus?*, gave it to her and then prayed. I really like this book as a follow up to witnessing encounters. Since Christ is the center of a salvation explanation, *Who Is This Jesus?* presents a straightforward picture of Jesus that is understandable to an unchurched person. This conveniently-sized book has a chapter entitled "How You Can Know Him" which adds extra clout to what I had already shared.

I keep some copies on hand at church and in my car, so I have them nearby for those "unexpected" times when God works through me to



shine the light of His good news...news that can change a person's life for eternity.

## Alternative Terms

I was scheduled to lecture on the occult at a Catholic church. The head of the Blue Army was going to be there, and the person sponsoring me did not want me to use the term "born again" or "saved." That was no problem. I used the word "know" from John 17:3 as I told them how we must "know" Jesus Christ in a personal and intimate way. I explained the biblical requirement of being born again without ever using that term. I also explained the meaning of the "sign of the cross" which fascinated them.

I was supposed to speak for an hour-and-a-half, but they kept me for three-and-a-half hours, until after 11:00 p.m., asking questions with the majority of people staying. They said it was the largest attendance for such an event and took all the books, pamphlets and audio tapes I had brought.

## Know the Lord

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for "know" (ginosko), used when Jesus said, "I never knew you; depart from Me ..." (Matthew 7:23) is the same word used by Mary when she said to the angel Gabriel who had come to announce the birth of Jesus, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34 NKJV); she had never had an intimate relationship with a man. The same Greek word for "know" was used again when Jesus said: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Scripture teaches that we must know the Lord by having an intimate and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A Christian is someone who has a restored relationship with God the Father through a personal faith and acceptance of His Son Jesus and His finished work on the cross. The true concept of biblical Christianity is not a lifeless external form of religion, but a living, vital personal relationship with the Creator God of the universe who is knowable and seeks to be known.

## Agnostic Philosopher

A young man walked into the ministry center after hours. I was working late alone when he came in. He identified himself as an agnostic philosopher and wanted to know if I would talk to him about belief in God. I said, "Sure, come into my office."

For over an hour, I answered his many questions and shared evidence for

Jesus and the Bible. As he was leaving, he said, “You are the first minister who invited me in and actually had answers. Most either are intimidated or will not take the time.” I explained that ultimate truth will eventually lead one to Jesus Christ, and I am not threatened by other theories because I have examined the evidence and am confident in my faith.

He asked as he was leaving, “May I come back and talk again?” I said, “Sure. I do not have time to repeatedly meet with those who are biased or argumentative and not open to the truth, but I will spend time with serious searchers.”

## Always Be Ready to Give an Answer

Not only will you have numerous witnessing opportunities, but you will meet many people who will challenge your faith.

Remember the apostle Peter’s words: “Sanctify [set apart] Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense [give an answer] to everyone who asks you to give an account [the reason] for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Peter 3:15).

If you do not have an answer, do not panic, just say, “I will get back with you.” That is how I learned to be more effective at witnessing. I was challenged many times with questions and comments for which I did not have adequate answers, so I went back and studied and got on my knees. Then, I went out with the answers to life from God’s Word and through His Spirit.

# Airport Witnessing



I have had hundreds of witness opportunities associated with airports: on the way to and from airports, waiting in terminals and during flights. Because I will probably never see that person again, I will often give him or her a copy of a book or pamphlet I have written or an audio message. It doesn't take much effort to give someone a book or tract, and it may have eternal implications. Most people graciously receive them when they realize that I wrote it. Some even want it autographed.

## Delays

As I waited in line to check-in for my flight from Cleveland to Chicago, a woman in front of me asked if I would save her spot while she made an important phone call. When she returned, she told me the story of her dilemma. Before we parted ways, I reached into my briefcase and offered her my book, *Strength through Weakness*, which she gratefully received.

My flight was canceled, so I had US Air rebook me on United. I had to go standby, and my flight was to leave in just a few minutes. As I raced to the gate, I was delayed by a young security guard. He was intrigued when he inspected my briefcase and saw health food and my Bible. He asked me questions about my faith for several minutes, and I got to my gate just seconds after they closed the door.

As I sat in the airport reading while awaiting the next flight, I glanced up and saw a man I had met in the check-in line. We had talked briefly as he told me he was back in Cleveland to visit his father who was having health problems. When I saw him again, I grabbed a copy of my *Strength through Weakness* book and said, "I just missed my flight, which made it possible for me to see you again. I think this book is meant for you." He graciously received it.

Because my flight was delayed, I arrived in Chicago too late to get a ride from the airport to Wheaton College on the free bus provided by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Before we parted at Wheaton College, I gave the Palestinian taxi driver a tip and my book, *Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ*, which he also willingly accepted.

## Timing Is Everything

Shortly thereafter, while flying from Pittsburgh to San Diego, I almost missed my flight due to road construction. With less than half an hour before takeoff, I knew I would not make it if I went to the end of the extremely long security line, so I walked near to the front of the line and asked a young woman if I could step in line. She was happy to let me do so. She asked what I did and when I told her, she said she was a Christian and that her friend goes on mission trips. In appreciation for her kindness, I gave her my *Spiritual Warfare* and *Overcoming Giants* books—both of which she was elated to receive because she needed something to read in the air.

During the flight, I read in the magazine I brought with me the powerful testimony of a Muslim who came to Christ. I tore the article out in hopes of giving it to a Muslim. While walking through the Minneapolis airport to catch the final leg of my trip to San Diego, I walked up to a young man and asked, “Are you a Muslim?” Looking bewildered, he responded, “Yes.” As I handed him the article, I said, “I just read a fascinating article about a Muslim that I think you would enjoy.” He took the article, looked it over and then thanked me for giving it to him.

I got bumped to a later flight from Minneapolis to San Diego and received a free airline ticket for being delayed for a few hours. It gave me a chance to do some more work on my upcoming book, *Overcoming Sexual Immorality*. A woman with a Middle Eastern accent was going standby to San Diego but was unable to get on any flights. She was from Iraq and in broken English was trying to explain to the agent at the gate that she had to get to her sister’s home in San Diego. I helped her communicate with the agent and then told her I would pray that she got on the flight, which she did. When I saw her with her sister at the San Diego airport, I gave her my book *Who Is This Jesus?* The sister was bewildered, but she was most happy to receive it.

## On My Way to San Jose

During a flight from Minneapolis to San Jose to speak at the Arab Christian Center in Pacific Grove, California, I struck up a conversation with a young man. He was Catholic, but his mother was Buddhist. Sharing some of the evidence for the Bible and Jesus Christ, he seemed very interested. On the other side of me was a young woman. She was a Muslim from India who was married and attending college in America. She and I also had a friendly conversation. Before we de-boarded the plane, I gave her a copy of my book *Who Is This Jesus?* and to him, a copy of the *Reaching Your Maximum Potential in Christ* book. Both of them graciously, and even enthusiastically, accepted the books.

## From Christian to New Age

During another flight, I sat beside a woman named Diane who had graduated from a conservative Christian college. She had attended a Baptist church, but she was currently attending a non-denominational community church. Yet, along with her profession of faith in Jesus and the Bible, she embraced New Age spirituality. Intrigued by her double belief system, I began a conversation with her.

Meditation and yoga were the doorways through which her beliefs and practices were completely modified. Diane said she and her husband no longer attended church because “nature is her sanctuary.” She still has encounters with “Jesus” through meditation and trance channeling. Judgmental people and “negative energy” are something Diane avoids, so if I was going to have an opportunity to share with her, it had to be in a non-confrontational manner. Several times, she mentioned how much she enjoyed conversing with me because I was such a positive person and respectful of her beliefs.

Diane listened intently as I emphasized the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the amazing credibility of the Bible through examples from history, archaeology and prophecy. She agreed but went on to say that I was limited by the Bible. By looking within through meditation and to spirit beings through trance channeling, she felt she had tapped into knowledge and experiences that surpass and transcend the Bible. However, in reality, her scope was limited to subjective experiences, while I possessed the unfathomable depth and riches of God’s Word with its amazing evidence to back up its authority and truth. It will take an eternity to discover the magnificence of God and the wonders of the universe He has created! I asked Diane by what authority she based her beliefs and eternal destiny. She said it was her inner peace from harmony with nature, a love and acceptance of all things (except biblical Christianity) and her experiences with the spirit entities.

“What about those who never heard of Jesus Christ?” Diane asked. I told her, “God is a merciful God who would move heaven and earth to reach anyone who has a desire to know Him. Jeremiah 29:13 says: ‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.’ I then shared some accounts of miraculous conversions of Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists and others. “What would God have to do,” I asked, “to convince you that Jesus Christ really is the only way?” Unable (or unwilling) to answer, she merely said that her experiences and the spirit guides she encounters through meditation and trance channeling affirm that all ways lead to God.

“Consider the possibility” I stated, “that according to the Bible, the entities you are encountering could be demonic beings who are propagating a deception.” She insisted this was an impossibility because they were so loving and peaceful in her experiences with them. “Besides,” she said, “I am also having encounters with Jesus through my meditation and channeling.” I responded, “The apostle Paul warned about another Jesus...” She interrupted to say that Paul was negative and judgmental. I retorted that we all have to make judgments every

day in the decisions we make concerning what we do or do not do and what we believe or do not believe.

Diane asked my perspective on homosexuality, so I provided a biblical overview. She replied that Paul had been in prison where men were being raped by other prisoners. According to her, Paul was not against homosexuality, but against men raping other men. “Besides,” she said, “Jesus never spoke against homosexuality.” I answered, “Jesus said, ‘From the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh’” (Mark 10:6-8 NKJV).

I brought up the afterlife and the biblical requirement to enter Heaven. Diane indicated her belief in reincarnation. She feels she will keep coming back until she gets it right just as she believed that Jesus was reincarnated several times before He became the Christ. I responded with Hebrews 9:27: “It is destined for people to die once, and after this comes judgment.” Yet Diane assured me she will see me in Heaven, as well as everyone else who believes in peace and unity. I said, “If you are right Diane, I will make it into your Heaven because of my positive faith and lifestyle, but if the Bible is accurate (and I am convinced it is) then those who do not accept God’s provision of salvation through Jesus Christ will be excluded. No wonder Jesus said that there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when they realize what they have forfeited.”

In reply she said, “God would never say to anyone, ‘No, no, you can’t enter.’ He will welcome everyone.” So I countered, “Suppose someone walks into your house and decides to move in. You will say, ‘I don’t know you, so please leave!’ Likewise, a righteous and Holy God must exclude sin from His eternal Kingdom. We all fall far short without forgiveness through Christ’s shed blood.” It was ironic that exactly when I said, “The blood of Jesus is our only means of salvation,” she spilled tomato juice all over her lap. As she wiped up the spill with napkins I said, “This will serve as a constant reminder to you that salvation is only through the blood of Jesus Christ.” She smiled squeamishly.

As we reached our destination, we were both amazed how fast time passed, enjoying our conversation for the entire two-hour flight. While she felt the universe brought us together to “expand” my mind and beliefs, I am convinced God put us together for a greater purpose. I pray God’s Spirit draws her back to Jesus Christ—not a New Age or reincarnated Jesus, but the Jesus of the Bible. And I do hope to see her again—in Heaven.

## Flight to India

Flying to India to speak at a convention in the Himalayas, I had an almost seven-hour flight from London to Delhi. Sitting next to me was a Hindu university student from America on her way to visit her family in India. She wanted to talk, so for the first four hours, all I did was ask her questions about Hinduism. She

said, "This is wonderful, I love talking with you."

Then, I began to ask her such questions as: What do you think about Jesus Christ? Have you ever considered the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible that only Jesus fulfilled? Did you know that Jesus claims to be the only way of salvation? Then, I would explain and expand on each question.

Nearing the end of our flight, she politely said, "What you are saying is very interesting." I offered her a copy of my book, *Who Is This Jesus?* which she eagerly accepted. She wrote to me three different times saying, "Your book is most fascinating. Please come to see my husband and me. We want to talk further about this Jesus." Although I was never able to meet with her and her husband, I did send them additional literature and hope to see them both one day in Heaven.

## Connecting with Brahmin Hindu

On Wednesday, October 13, my son-in-law Clay, my nephew Rich and I departed the San Diego airport headed for Darjeeling, India. We would not be at a hotel until Friday night (October 15). Getting through the Delhi airport was of great concern to me considering what I had gone through ten years earlier doing the very same thing—having to go through customs, get a taxi to the domestic terminal (from the international terminal) and wait from 10 p.m. to 10 a.m. for our flight from Delhi to Bagdogra in the Himalayas.

While waiting in Amsterdam for our flight to Delhi, we met Sundeep, a young Indian man who worked for KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and was heading for Delhi where he lived and worked. He was hoping to get on this flight but was uncertain there would be an available seat. He was a Brahmin (highest ranking of social classes in Hindu India/priestly class) who had been stranded for two days and was worried about getting on a flight as a standby passenger.

As we were waiting by the gate, Sundeep told me he was literally shaking with anxiety and did not think he would get on. I put my hand on his shoulder and said, "Lord, get Sundeep on this flight." I reassured him he would get a seat. Clay, Rich and I boarded this huge plane and took our seats, hoping to see Sundeep board. As we settled in for our flight, we excitedly watched as Sundeep took what appeared to be the last vacant seat—right next to me.

As we became friends, Sundeep offered to organize our transportation in Delhi, which was the only connection of the trip I was uncertain about. When we landed in Delhi, Sundeep waited until we got our luggage—although 50 other pieces of luggage were missing from our flight, all our luggage arrived. Sundeep helped us get through customs without anyone checking our luggage, which enabled me to carry a large duffel bag of books and audio tapes untouched through customs.

Sundeep then helped us exchange money at the airport, booked a hotel for

us from his KLM office at the airport and booked us a taxi to our hotel (so we would not get “ripped off” as in a previous experience). We found ourselves in a great hotel in Delhi that was safe and without mosquitoes, providing a three-room suite for all three of us and included a delicious buffet breakfast.

## Sharing Christ in the Air

The following account was written by KC Chenoweth who, along with her husband and another couple, assisted me and my wife on our Around the World 2 Outreach.

As soon as Bill and Karen were seated on the plane, Bill began chatting amicably with a young woman named Stephanie, seated next to him. Her husband was a professional hockey player. Bill, with his winning way of being a friend (not just politely “friendly”), was most likely to launch into sharing Christ with her before we would reach Phoenix. Their discussion took the better part of the three-hour flight. She was very interested, and every time Bill would let the conversation rest, she would take it up again with another question or comment.

During their conversation on faith, she said she was a Christian (Lutheran). However, Bill pointed out that her beliefs (God as an impersonal concept, many ways to salvation ...) and practices (meditation, yoga ...) leaned more toward a New Age belief system than a biblical Christian faith. She pondered his comment, then agreed with him. Bill then said, “Now that we have established that foundation, let’s discuss the evidence for both of our belief systems.” They had a great discussion and before disembarking at Phoenix, she said that she had a lot to think about.

Such was the beginning of an exciting “Around the World” outreach on which my husband Rick and I assisted Bill and Karen Rudge. We started in Phoenix where Bill and Karen appeared on television, were interviewed on radio and ministered at a church. Then, our team journeyed onward to South Korea to minister at a military base. Next, in the Philippines, Bill spoke at high school assemblies and a seminary. After a brief time in Thailand touring Bangkok and distributing Bill’s books and audio tapes, we traveled onward to India. Bill spoke at conventions and churches and the rest of the team ministered in various capacities. Then, we traveled onward to Israel for scriptural research and distribution of literature before heading back to New York and our homes.



The whirlwind of 19 travel days on 11 different airline flights provided us with many amazing witness opportunities and lasting memories as we skipped around the world at a breathtaking speed, ministering in many countries.

Just as we had numerous spontaneous witnessing opportunities, the Lord calls each of us to be aware of ministry opportunities in our own neighborhood, workplace or school, so we can be a reflection of Jesus in our day-to-day life.

## If Ever Needed

During a flight from Jacksonville to Pittsburgh, I had an enjoyable conversation with the man sitting beside me. He worked for professional baseball and football teams. Nearing the end of our flight, I handed him a “God’s Promise” tract as I told him that I hoped he never needed to use it, but if any of the players ever lost a loved one, this tract would give them some comfort. He looked it over, thanked me, then put it inside a book in his case to hand out if ever necessary.

## The Validation of Archaeology

Karen and I met a couple at the San Diego airport, both of whom were archaeologists on their way home to Baltimore. I talked to the husband while Karen chatted with his wife, and my mother talked to his young children. We had all volunteered to get bumped from our overbooked flight, so during our wait I asked him numerous questions about his archaeological excavations and research. He was delighted to share them with me. We talked for over 30 minutes. Then, I shared with him some of the many archaeological discoveries that have validated the truth of the Bible. He acknowledged the incredible accuracy of biblical accounts and agreed that no archaeological discovery has refuted the Scriptures. He told me about his religious background, but also his belief in evolution. I told him it would take more faith for me to believe in evolution than in the Creator revealed in Scripture.

My faith in the Creator is very reasonable since not one scientific fact has refuted His existence. Although some scientists suppress or deny the truth, numerous scientists—both throughout history and present day—confirm the reality of the God of the Bible, as do my life experiences. I told my archaeologist friend that I knew many scientists, doctors and other archaeologists who were convinced by the evidence of many disciplines including science, history, mathematics, archaeology, health and prophecy that the Bible is God’s Word and Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah and the only way of salvation.

With sincerity in his eyes and voice, he asked me how I came to have such

faith. After briefly sharing my testimony, I challenged him to evaluate the evidence without bias. I told him that I am certain if he does so, he will come to faith in Jesus Christ. At that point, we were informed by the Delta gate representative that we were all being bumped from our flight (till the next day) and would receive vouchers for future free trips.

As we parted company I commented, “I would say the Lord has blessed us!” to which he and his wife responded with a big smile. It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance meeting appointed by God. I have never seen him again but have prayed several times that he and his wife would come to know the Lord Jesus in a real and personal way. Only eternity will reveal the impact on him—and countless others—through witness encounters.

## Two Nurses and a Lawyer

Flying from New Orleans to Charlotte, I sat beside two nurses from Children’s Hospital heading for training in Wisconsin. We talked about many issues including the recent pandemic, the current health crisis, the condition of our schools, the moral crisis and resulting violence in our nation, and what their nonprofit and my ministry were doing to help others. Eventually, I brought up the topic of faith and discovered they were both Catholic. They listened intently as I shared the miraculous way my life was saved in Santa Fe and how Benedictine monks in New Mexico planted the seeds of salvation in my heart by giving me a tract entitled “The New Birth.”

During the next leg of my trip from Charlotte to Pittsburgh, I sat beside a young female lawyer from Los Angeles working for a large national legal firm. She was amiable, so we talked about various topics. When she mentioned she had previously lived in Albuquerque, I knew I had my chance to share Christ with her. I asked her, “Do you want to hear an amazing story about Albuquerque?” She affirmed that she did, so I told her about my brother who had lived in a hippie commune there. One May, I hitchhiked out west hoping to see him. When I was told that he was not there, and they did not know when he was returning, I decided to head back home, and I caught a ride north to Santa Fe, only to discover it was dropping to 25 degrees that night. Stranded hopelessly on the streets of Santa Fe with no one willing to help me, I faced freezing to death since all I had was a short sleeved-shirt and plastic poncho to keep me warm. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, came a car with hippies in it, including my brother! Not even knowing that I was in New Mexico, God used my brother to save my life.

Like evidence presented in a court of law, she listened intently to the many details of my testimony, and then exclaimed, “That is truly amazing!” As the plane neared Pittsburgh, I offered her a copy of *Who Is This Jesus?* while mentioning that another lawyer who read it said it was written like a legal brief. As she enthusiastically received the book, I told her that it will further describe the One who spared my life in New Mexico.

# A New Age Author

My son, BJ, and I were flying home from Texas after performing the wedding of a couple who met in Iraq while serving in the U.S. Army. The final leg of our trip was on a small plane from Washington, D.C. to Pittsburgh. BJ and my wife, Karen, took seats A and B on one side of the plane, and I took the seat across the aisle, hoping to have two seats to stretch out and sleep.

Unexpectedly, a woman came down the aisle and informed me she was to occupy the empty seat beside me. She was in her late 50s or early 60s, self-assured, but friendly, and sharply dressed with a turquoise necklace. Ginny seemed to have the aura of New Age spirituality.

Though I was exhausted from lack of sleep, I perceived the Lord had other plans and was providing a witnessing opportunity. She was coming from Florida and spent the first 10 minutes telling me interesting stories about several hurricanes she had been through.

As our conversation progressed, she asked what I did for a living. I told her I worked for a Christian nonprofit organization and often did speaking engagements, radio broadcasts and wrote books. She wanted to know the type of topics I spoke on and wrote about. I mentioned courage, determination, self-control, reaching your maximum potential, overcoming giants and other topics that would be of interest to her.

Ginny said she was a Christian. I asked her what church she attended, and it was something like the “Universal Church of Divine Man,” which confirmed what I had initially sensed. She said she was a writer and photographer, and she hoped one day to write a best-selling novel. From our discussion and by then familiar with her background, I felt it was a real possibility she would accomplish this goal. God was giving me a special opportunity, so I prayed He would also give me wisdom to say the right words that would not be rejected before I was able to convey what He wanted me to share.

I asked about her belief system which included spirit guides, meditation and various occult practices. So, I began to share my background concerning how I also had rejected Christianity and searched in New Age and Eastern beliefs and practices; she was elated. We also discovered that we both had a background in the Methodist church—which gave us more common ground.

For the 45-minute flight, our exciting conversation flowed. She was fascinated that I had been in the Himalayas and other exotic places. She wanted to know more about my background and experiences and the knowledge I acquired through the path I had walked, so I shared some of my journey and my search. I told her about being stranded in Santa Fe, and the miracle that happened there. She was amazed. I shared with her how I had investigated archeology, science, history, prophecy, and that it all led me to the conclusion that Jesus is God’s unique revelation of truth.

Her response was that she prays to a “supreme being” but believes there are

many ways to him. To help her understand the biblical truth of Jesus being the only way of salvation, I used the following illustration: “You said something profound a few minutes ago. You said you do not want to write a mundane book, but a best seller. My research has led me to conclude that no one else has the unique evidence that Jesus has. Therefore, why should I offer something I believe to be inferior when I believe Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God?”

“Let’s suppose you write this bestselling book, which I am sure you will write. Time passes and I want to reconnect with you. But how? I research and find there are several people who have the same name as you. How do I find the right person—the one I met on this plane? I meet one person with the same name, but she is not you. She does not have the proof to convince me she is the right person I am searching for. Then, I meet someone else with the same name, but the evidence excludes her from being you.

“Finally, after doing much research and investigation, I find that there is only one country, one state, one city, one street and one address on that street where the real ‘Ginny’ I am looking to reconnect with, lives. I go there and meet you again.

“That is the way the God of the Bible has revealed who is His one and only Son. The ‘Supreme Being’ has revealed Himself exclusively through Jesus Christ and given us the evidence. When we do our investigation and put all the evidence together, it leads us conclusively and exclusively to faith in Jesus Christ.” She said, “That makes a lot of sense.”

Just before landing, she told me about the spirits she is in contact with. I told her the story of the witch doctor in Haiti and my warning to him that one day the spirits would turn on him and the only One who could deliver him at that time would be the Jesus of the Bible. She replied, “When I deal with these spirits, I always ask them to say the name of Jesus. If they cannot say it, I know they are bad spirits, and I do not deal with them.” I told her that she needs to go one step further. “Ask them to say that the Jesus of the Bible is Lord. That would be a more thorough test for them.” Again she said, “That makes a lot of sense.”

I believe I shared with her everything the Holy Spirit wanted me to share in a way she could relate to and understand. She parted by thanking me for the conversation and asked if she could email me for insight and take some of my ideas and work a spiritual twist into some of her future novels. Of course, I consented.

## You Never Know

The preceding examples were just a few of the hundreds of witness opportunities I have had in airports and on airplanes. Usually, I ask questions and listen to their stories first; sometimes, I give a verbal witness and sometimes it is a book or pamphlet, and other times it is both. Almost always people are eager to talk and

are happy to receive a book or pamphlet. I have met some incredible people, and it is awesome to see how God's Spirit weaves a powerful witness through our conversations.

My hope is that you are sensitive to taking advantage of witness opportunities while being respectful and having the love and boldness to testify of your faith in Christ. You never know what that person may be facing or how God's Spirit may have prepared their hearts for just such an encounter, using your witness to draw them to Jesus or to encourage them.

# Opportunities Abound



Sometimes, witness encounters happen in the most unusual places, and often at inopportune times, but we must respond in some capacity. We should “be ready in season and out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2).

Second Timothy 4:1-5 states: “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

## Hospitals and Nursing Homes

I enjoy visiting hospitals, assisted living and nursing homes to talk to patients and their families—either one-on-one or as a group—before a life-threatening surgery or imminent death. I take copies of my tracts “God’s Promise” and “What Is a Christian?” to pass out. Injured athletes are often given my son’s book *Faith through the Fire*. After visiting a specific person or persons, I rarely leave a hospital or nursing home without unexpected opportunities to talk and pray with other patients or family members I may meet in the hallways or who invite me into their rooms.

In an elevator, I will ask people I meet who they are visiting. If it is a family member, I tell them I will pray for them and often hand them a “God’s Promise” tract before one of us exits the elevator. A mere smile, a word of encouragement, a touch on the shoulder, a prayer or a tract often brings joy and hope to lonely people in difficult circumstances. It is wonderful to see such a grateful response as most people are happy to have someone to talk to and pray for them. Many have genuinely put their faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of their difficult circumstances or in the face of imminent death.

# Marilyn

One day, Marilyn called to inform me that she had suffered a heart attack and died in a local hospital emergency room but was brought back by heroic efforts. Because I was so positive in my faith and attitude, she wanted to see me, so I visited her at a nursing home a few days before she returned to her house. Knowing she leaned toward New Age spirituality, I said, “God brought you back for a purpose—perhaps to make you ready to meet your Creator.” She agreed.

I explained that she could not make it into God’s kingdom through good works or any other human effort. Scripture tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)” and our only means of forgiveness is “being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24). I emphasized Jesus’ words: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6). God’s Spirit used her circumstances to prepare her heart to heed the message which He sent me to proclaim. A few days later (just two days before Christmas), I stopped by her house with a small present that represents all our hope and dreams for this life and throughout eternity. She was elated to unwrap three large spikes in the shape of a cross with the words “Amazing Grace” engraved upon it.

# Johnny

While in the same nursing home visiting Marilyn, I felt prompted by the Spirit of God to visit Johnny, a 50-year-old man down the hall whose emaciated body weighed less than 75 pounds. It seemed he had given up on both life and hope in God. He was awake, so I sat down beside his bed as he fixed his eyes on mine. I told him that even if he has little hope for this life, there is hope for both eternal life and a new body without pain and suffering. I shared the story of the two thieves suffering on the crosses beside Jesus: while one mocked Him, the other believed in Him, and Jesus promised that he would be with Him in paradise that very day. I assured Him there is a God and that my own search led me to faith in Jesus Christ to whom I have entrusted my life and eternal destiny. In a feeble voice, he asked my name. “Bill” I told him, “And God loves you so much that He impressed on my heart to visit you today.”

With his eyes riveted on me the entire time, I asked if he would like me to pray for him to receive Jesus Christ as his Savior. He nodded that he would. After prayer for salvation, he said a decisive “Amen.” I assured him that, like the thief on the cross beside Jesus. When his life ends here, he will immediately be welcomed into God’s presence and that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). There was a glow in Johnny’s eyes that affirmed the work of the Holy Spirit within his heart.

I am so thankful I obeyed the Lord’s voice to visit him and be a part of what God wanted to do in his heart. Later that night, when I relayed what had taken place to his mother, she sobbed as she informed me that he had never responded

to anyone or any witness before. She was overjoyed to hear the good news. Less than three weeks later, he died, but the family was comforted knowing of those few minutes with him at the nursing home.

## Captive Audiences

Prisons and military bases are two of my favorite types of facilities to visit. They have what I consider to be captive audiences. It is easier for God to get their attention since they do not have all the distractions so many people have on the outside. They have more time and opportunities to reflect and ponder the meaning of life. Many prisoners and military personnel have written to inform us they have given their life to Christ or have been strengthened in their walk with the Lord by reading one of our books.

Prisoners and military personnel appreciate receiving letters, newsletters and reading materials. You could write letters and enclose tracts and Bible studies. What an opportunity to touch the lives of those who put their lives in harm's way while serving the defense of our nation and minister to those who are incarcerated.

## Lost Opportunities

What hurts me most is to have met a non-believer who dies unexpectedly and either I did not have an opportunity or did not take advantage of an opportunity to share the Gospel with them.

Of course, God is sovereign and by His Spirit He has ways of reaching people with the Gospel that supersede me. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus for failing to witness to everyone I meet, but I (and hopefully you too, since you are reading this book) want to touch as many lives for Jesus Christ as I possibly can.

## Be Ready

There are many unexpected opportunities to witness for Jesus Christ. As I tell people who go with me on mission trips, "We have to expect the unexpected and be flexible and adaptive." Following are a few more of the many impromptu encounters I have had and some of the methods I have used in witnessing.

## The Martial Artist

When I was a young Christian, I worked out with another guy in the martial arts. All I said to him about my faith during several days of intense training together was, "Bob, I want you to know one thing: Jesus Christ has changed my life and I



have a personal relationship with Him.” For four days, we worked out 5 to 6 hours a day. At the end of those four days he said, “Bill, I knew you before, and there is something different about you. What is it?” I shared my newfound faith with him, and he gave his life to Jesus Christ. He is faithfully walking with Jesus Christ to this day.

## Weightlifters

Sometimes, when I meet a weightlifter, I’ll say something like, “You look strong and physically fit!” Usually appreciating the compliment, I then respectfully ask, “How long do you think you will maintain your physique and strength? A few years, maybe several decades? Perhaps, it would be a good idea to consider how long eternity will be. My suggestion is to spend at least an equal amount of time and effort nourishing your soul and building up your spiritual muscles through having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, reading your Bible, praying and attending a biblically-based church. Physical muscles eventually fade, but spiritual strength will be with you always and bless you forever.”

## Professor Visits the Ministry Center

An atheist professor walked into our ministry center during an event. He said to me, “There is no God and I can prove it.” I said, “Really? Let’s talk.” He shared several scientific theories he thought would convince me. Then, I asked him, “When has life ever come from non-life? Where can you show me design without a designer? Can you provide observable scientific evidence that something ever came from nothing?”

He was speechless as I led him into my office in another section of the building. Pulling out my *Impossible* records notebook, I read just a few documented accounts of the numerous miraculous interventions the Lord has done in my life and ministry and said, “Now refute them as mere coincidence. Maybe one or two of these could be accredited to chance, but all of these—in context—are impossible to be refuted as coincidence.” He had no response and humbly walked out of the building.

## The Therapist

While I was receiving massage therapy for injuries sustained in an auto accident, I witnessed to my therapist, Chris. During the ensuing weeks, he asked me many questions about my faith and the Bible. He often made his next patient wait until he was done with all his questions because he said I had answers no one else ever gave him.

One day, I told him to read the book of John twice—once like it was not

true and then again believing without any doubt that it is the Word of God. Knowing he was ready for more following the completion of this assignment, I suggested a church which I thought would be helpful to him; he felt the pastor was speaking directly to him. He accepted Christ as his Savior and became a strong witness for Him.

When a person comes to Christ, God changes the inner man through the Holy Spirit, and one's lifestyle begins to conform to God's will and standards. This is something only God can do. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## Considering Eternity

While working out at the YMCA in San Diego, I overheard two businessmen discussing death. One said, "I am not sure what's beyond the grave, but no one will immortalize me anyway, or remember me years from now." The other man said, "I figure that whatever is out there will have to accept me as I am." I said, "I don't mean to jump in, but don't you think eternity is a long time? Therefore, it might be wise to spend a little more time considering its implications. Pause to reflect on the complexity of the human body and your DNA, the diversity and splendor of nature and the vastness and awesomeness of the universe which contains billions of galaxies with billions of stars. If there is a God who created us and this universe, are you going to say to Him, 'You must accept me on my terms?' No, if there is a Creator, then we must come to Him on His terms, not ours." One of them responded, "That makes a lot of sense."

They listened intently—their body language indicating they agreed with what I had said so far. I shared how I had rejected Christianity and spent many years searching in atheism, occultism, New Ageism and Eastern disciplines until my search for truth brought me back to the God of the Bible. One of the men asked, "Then Jesus Christ is the only way?" I said, "Without a doubt, because He alone has the overwhelming evidence to validate His claims." After sharing some of the evidence for the inspiration of the Bible and the claims of Christ, I thanked them for listening, and they thanked me for sharing.

## The Body Degenerates

For a long time, I had been witnessing, bit by bit, to an atheist I knew whenever I saw him, and often gave him copies of our newsletter. He had health challenges resulting from the wrong prescription medicine that had nearly cost him his life. This man was always congenial and listened politely. One day, we were talking outside the ministry center when he told me he was recovering from a broken ankle which required him to wear a brace the rest of his life. I pointed to the sky as I said, "Now you know why you need to believe in the Lord. Your body is

continually degenerating and without Him you have no hope.” He smiled and said, “You are right.”

Slowly, faith was building as he requested prayer on several occasions. Later, he was overjoyed that his own daughter was the motivating factor for me to present an assembly at her elementary school.

## Anti-Israel and Anti-America Rally

While traveling through various cities in Europe with friends, we often passed tracts to people walking by or placed them into mailboxes as we walked by.

In Germany, there was an anti-war, anti-Israel and anti-America rally consisting of a couple hundred—mostly Muslim—demonstrators outside a large, old cathedral in use as a “museum.” My friend and I stepped out of our car, leaving our wives and his son safely inside, while we walked through the crowd passing out about 35 tracts, mostly to the men. After glancing at the title, the men slipped them into their pockets and the women quickly concealed them under their burkas—only three men refused them.

Many Iranian Muslims have told me, if given the opportunity and if there were freedom of choice without fear of the consequences for converting, they would become Christians.

## No Chance Encounters

Rosemary Lozier shares the following illustration about her brother.

You never know whom you might meet! This was evident one day as my brother, Randy, was on his way back from the grocery store. His car broke down and was sitting part way out onto the busy North Buhl Farm Drive. Just as he was wondering what to do next, along came Bill Rudge. Bill asked him if he could use a hand and together they managed to get the car off the road as Bill pushed and Randy steered.

After Randy thanked him, Bill said to him, “Many people have helped me in my lifetime and so the Lord often provides me the opportunity to give back.” Randy then looked at Bill and asked, “Who are you?” As Bill told him who he was, they both realized they had met before. Randy informed Bill he was my brother.

This was no chance encounter. If we allow God to use us, He uses every opportunity in our lives to reach souls for Christ. I am glad Bill came along that day to help my brother. May God use us all to help

someone in need and be a witness for Him.

Randy passed away at age 47 from cirrhosis of the liver after years of alcohol abuse. We gathered at my sister's house just days before he passed. At least three of us asked if he was ready to meet the Lord. He assured us he was. I believe he is in Heaven because of our prayers and that brief encounter with Bill.

## I Don't Know Who You Are

I was asked by a friend to share the Gospel with her neighbors because the husband had cancer and did not have much time to live. Both he and his wife were religious, knowing about God, but they did not know the Lord in a personal way. There was much commotion between their dog and bathroom interruptions—needless to say, a difficult setting to share the Gospel.

Then, the Lord gave me the following illustration: “If a stranger walked in your front door and said, ‘Hi, I’m home! I’m going up to my room,’ you would respond by quickly saying, ‘I don’t know who you are. Get out of here!’ However, if one of your children walked in and said the same thing, you would say, ‘Glad to see you! Come on in!’”

In the Bible, Jesus says there will be those who think they are His children because they go to church or profess to believe in Him. However, when they stand before Him, He will, in essence, say, “Get out of here. I never knew you—you are not My child” (Matthew 7:21-23). In contrast, Jesus will tell those who know Him that they are His, “Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:23 NKJV).

I assured the husband and wife that we can know now what type of greeting we will receive when we meet the Lord. I shared the words of Paul in 2 Timothy 1:12, “...I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.” I believe the Lord opened their eyes that night to receive the Gospel.

## Mathematician

While attending a graduation party I talked with a retired math teacher named Alex. He said the probability of evolution is mathematically impossible, so he should start getting to know the One up above. He listened intently to the evidence I shared for Jesus Christ and the Bible.

A few months later, while visiting him in the hospital, I was seeking a way to help him understand and accept the Gospel. The Lord gave me an idea, and I shared it with Alex: “If I walk into your classroom when you are taking attendance and my name is not on your list, you would tell me I must leave and

go to the class to which I am assigned or go to the principal's office to enroll in your class, but if my name is on your attendance roster, then you would welcome me right in."

I continued the illustration. "When you give your life to Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Savior, your name is written in the Book of Life. When you stand before God and He opens the book and your name is there, you are welcomed into His eternal Kingdom. If your name is not there, then you will not gain entry—just as I would not be allowed in your classroom." His eyes lit up and he thanked me for making it so understandable.

I then prayed with him, following which he made the Catholic sign of the cross. I told him that I did some research on the sign of the cross and then proceeded to explain the meaning of what he just did. "Your three fingers represent the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). In essence, you are saying, 'I commit my mind, my heart and my strength to the triune God.'" I concluded by saying that is exactly what he needed to do: Commit his life to Jesus Christ—his mind, his heart (emotions and passions) and his body.

Jesus said it this way: "AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH" (Mark 12:30). This quote is from Deuteronomy 6:5: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

## Tell Me about Your Father

While I was buying blueberries, the young woman selling them told me about the recent death of her father. She was still grieving, so I asked her if her father knew the Lord. I wanted to find out her perspective in an attempt to bring her some hope and encouragement. She said, "Yes, he made his peace with God." I asked, "How about you?" She informed me that she went to church but wasn't close to the Lord.

I said to her, "You can tell me about your father and even show me pictures, and although I can know all about him, I will never have a personal relationship with him like you had." I continued, "Most people who go to church know about God like I know about your father, but God wants us to know Him in a personal way as you knew your father." Her eyes lit up as she told me that this is what she longed for.

After prayer, she hugged me as tears streamed down her face. She said, "This was not a chance meeting; I was meant to talk to you." I told her about a Bible study where she could grow in her relationship with Jesus Christ, and she enthusiastically accepted.

# From Opposition, to Tolerance, to Acceptance

I met Ed at the Bentley House, an assisted living facility where my mother had been living for the past several months. Ed resembled my father, and he and my mother became close companions. When I would visit my mother and pray with her in the community room, he would comment that belief in God or Heaven was nothing more than a fairy tale. Over the course of several months, I gave him much evidence for belief in God and the reality of Heaven. I often reminded him that one day he would stand before this God he does not acknowledge or believe in.

As the months passed and our conversations continued, I noticed he was gradually changing from a person strongly opposed to any belief in God, to a person who respectfully tolerated my conversations concerning belief in God, to a person who eventually said, when I told him he needed to have his name written in the Book of Life, "I hope my name is there, and I do want to be with the Lord in Heaven for eternity."

I encouraged Craig Snyder, a pastor friend of mine, to start having weekly services at this assisted living facility. Following one of those services, Craig prayed with Ed. Both of us are convinced Ed accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior before he passed away. At his funeral, I was requested to share about his faith in Jesus Christ, and it was both an honor and a joy to tell of his gradual transformation from opposition to tolerance to acceptance.

## Penny

The following account was written by Rosemary Lozier, a relative of Penny's.

Growing up on the West Hill of Sharon, Bill Rudge was known as one of the rough kids who always got into trouble. To him, God was a vague somebody who watched from afar. Nevertheless, God was weaving Bill's life for future witness encounters.

Recently, one of those woven in (by the hand of God) witness encounters was with Penny, a girl who had grown up on the West Hill with Bill. Now in her fifties, Penny had suffered with breast cancer for four years as it spread throughout her body.

As Penny grew weaker, she realized the need to give her life to Jesus Christ. Her sister, Sharon, and brother-in-law, Chuck, both pastors who also knew Bill from the West Hill, visited Penny. Her body racked with pain, she cried as she accepted the Lord into her heart. But God was not finished yet.

When Bill learned of Penny's condition, he visited her at her home where she was confined to bed. They had not seen each other for over forty years. Penny had heard about Bill's changed life and was elated to hear and see what God had done.

Penny was excited and encouraged as Bill shared how the Lord had worked in his life and how, in spite of overwhelming obstacles, God was always with him and worked everything together for good.

A few weeks after Bill's initial visit, he and I visited Penny one last time in her home. She was in the last hours of her life on earth. As she lay there, weak and tired, she listened intently as Bill spoke comforting words of God's faithfulness and then laid his hand on her arm and in prayer committed her into His hands. A few hours later, Penny peacefully went home to be with the Lord.

It was a beautiful sight to behold as I watched two friends from the West Hill of Sharon reunited all these years later. God's plan had come full circle. Bill had been used of God in a mighty way to help prepare her to enter Paradise.

## The Doctor's Wife

Thirty minutes before leaving for his daughter's wedding in Long Island, Dr. Damadian (the scientist who invented the MRI) called and asked Karen if we could take Dr. Todd and his wife, Elvira, to the wedding since they were also staying at Swan Inn in Long Island. Dr. Todd was the first doctor in Mexico to have an MRI, had been president of a large university in Mexico City and had served in the Mexican government. He told me Dr. Damadian had led him to become a born-again Christian.

After the wedding and reception, we took Dr. Todd and his wife back to the Swan Inn. On the way, Elvira began asking numerous questions about being born again. She said she is very religious (Catholic) but does not know the Lord the way I shared about Him in the wedding ceremony. When we arrived at Swan Inn, we continued our conversation in the parking lot. I knew she was ready to accept Christ, so I asked her if she wanted to pray to give her life to Jesus. She said, "Yes," and all four of us prayed together right there in the parking lot.

After flying back to Pittsburgh from New York City (just a few days before 9/11), Karen sent her several of my pamphlets and books to help her grow in her new relationship with Him.

# Brief Encounters



Some encounters are brief with little time to witness. But, if I feel an urge in my spirit to say or do something, I try to respond. The following are a few examples.

## Tiny Tim

I saw someone at an airport who resembled Tiny Tim—the long-haired guy who played a ukulele and sang “Tiptoe Through the Tulips.” Karen said, “That is not Tiny Tim.” I said I was certain it was, so I walked up to him and said that he looked like someone familiar. He asked me, “Who do I look like?” I said, “You look like Tiny Tim.” He replied, “That’s who I am.”

We only had a brief passing moment, and knowing I would probably never see him again, I hoped to get in a word of witness. He graciously asked me what I did and where I was going. I told him I was a Christian heading out on a mission trip. With a genuine smile on his face he said, “That is really nice.” That was all that could be said as we both parted quickly to our different flights. A few months later, I heard on the radio that Tiny Tim had died of a heart attack. I hope that somehow, that brief encounter was of eternal significance.

## \$6.66

I was buying a few items at the Ocean Beach Health Co-op where many of the employees and customers are into New Age beliefs. The young woman at the cash register said, “Oh, my!” when she saw that my total came to \$6.66. Taking advantage of the opportunity I said, “We had better read Revelation 13 to see what it says about the number 666.” When she agreed I said, “I have been studying the book of Revelation recently and it is most interesting.” I encouraged her to do likewise.

A few days later, I bought some more items and she happened to be the one whose line I came through. When I saw her, I said, “You are the 666 girl,” to which she smiled in acknowledgement. I told her a pamphlet and a book I had



written about the last days were in my car and asked if she would like a copy of each. She enthusiastically said she would. I gave them to her, trusting the Lord will use them to draw her to Him.

## No Help in There

An unexpected witness encounter happened one summer as I was walking up to the Giant Eagle grocery store. An older man with a walker was trying to enter the door of the State Liquor Store and got stuck halfway through as the door closed on him. He hollered, “Someone in there, help me!” but no one responded. I was in an instant dilemma: Do I help him enter a liquor store or not? Quickly I walked over and opened the door as I said to him, “There’s no help in there. Your only help and hope is the Lord Jesus Christ.”

You never know when or where an unexpected opportunity will arise—no matter how brief—to be a witness for Jesus Christ. So pray for opportunities and the discernment for what to say and do.

## When I Cannot Witness

Sometimes, I am in situations where I am unable to witness my faith in Jesus Christ or do not have an opportunity to do so. How I handle myself reflects my testimony. I try to be a positive example with my physical body, comments, attitude and spiritual discipline, so people will recognize there is something different about me and have a hunger and a desire to know more.

Numerous times, people have come up to me and asked how I have such confidence, faith, determination, self-control, positive attitude or peace. Then, I have the opportunity to tell them about Jesus Christ and the principles in God’s Word.

Dr. David Jeremiah stated:

Let’s resolve to be a testimony to everyone we meet. We’re not always able to share the Gospel by means of a formal presentation; but we can let a joyful countenance, a pleasant voice, a Bible verse or a promise of prayer, and a kind attitude go before us.

## Navy Seal Encounter

While conversing with a yoga instructor (age 27, from Jamaica and living in the U.S.) at a San Diego YMCA, a man, who has been training Navy Seals for the past year and a half, overheard us. He joined our conversation about worldviews. After listening to his philosophical viewpoints, I told him that I had rejected church and Christianity as weak and boring, and no longer were an option in my

search for meaning and purpose. He was elated! However, I continued by saying, “After trying everything imaginable, the only non-option—Jesus Christ and Christianity—became my only option.” I then shared some of the evidence I had discovered.

I told him that, “Like a person in the Navy, I do not tell the Admiral what I believe or want; I learn what he requires and I submit. Likewise, I do not determine my own path and expect God to accept it. I strive to know Him and submit to what He requires.” With his eyes locked on mine he nodded his head to affirm that what I said made sense. Right then, our conversation was interrupted when several people entered the sauna and began to meditate. I trust the Holy Spirit will use someone else to bring this man to the Lord.

# Corky

During the California wildfires of 2003, I volunteered as a chaplain for the American Red Cross. One Saturday night, I stopped at Sharp Cabrillo Hospital in San Diego to visit Todd whose amazing story, “Miracle on the Highway,” was shared in one of our ministry newsletters and radio broadcasts. On the way to Todd’s room, Karen and I met Corky, a woman who seemed distraught. She told us her friend, Kathy, was dying of cancer. In an attempt to discover if her friend was ready to meet the Lord and to offer some spiritual encouragement, I asked Corky if she wanted a chaplain to drop by her friend’s room. She responded “No, it is just a life process,” so I assured her we would pray for her friend.

The following Friday, I went by myself to visit Todd. Exiting the elevator on the eighth floor, there stood Corky. I said, “I know you. How is your friend?” She informed me that her friend had passed away the night before. I offered my sympathy for which she seemed visibly appreciative. After a brief conversation, I reached into my back pocket and pulled out the only copy I had of the *Faith Through the Fire* booklet as I said, “This is meant for you.” She graciously received it and thanked me twice.

The Lord’s timing is always perfect. We trust He used that small booklet which “just happened” to be in my pocket to bring her to Jesus. Sometimes, we plant a seed and someone else waters. Other times, we plant the seed and later have an opportunity to water it. But, God is the One who brings the increase. Only He can open someone’s spiritual eyes and draw them to Him, but it is our responsibility to be a witness for Him in any situation and in any way we can.

## Street Ministry at Haight-Ashbury

While speaking at an Arab Christian Center near San Francisco, I had the opportunity for street ministry at the infamous Haight-Ashbury. I felt as though I had stepped back into the hippie days of the 1960s when, as a teenager, I decided that Jesus was no longer an option in my life. I remembered how I eventually came to see that my generation had been fooled. Our peace rallies turned into hate demonstrations. Our free love turned into sex orgies and perversion. Our weed and drugs (to help us “find ourselves” and achieve enlightenment) led to physical addiction and spiritual counterfeits. But ultimately, I found in Jesus what free sex, drugs and Rock and Roll could not deliver.

Then, I saw her. A girl in her late teens or early twenties sitting on the sidewalk. Her face and clothes were dirty, her hair unkempt. She sat there in a drug-induced state, surrounded by death and disease. As I held my “Searching” pamphlet out for her and looked into her pitiable, but defiant, eyes she said, “No Christian material!”

I turned to hand a pamphlet to another young person and wondered—could that have been me had I not been open to the Lord's message? To this day, those eyes haunt me when I think about her. I pray that someone else witnessed to her and found her more receptive. I hope she did not die in that street but came to know Jesus as her Savior and Lord.

## Muslim Taxi Driver

Ministering in San Diego, I shared with a Muslim taxi driver from Iraq my faith in Jesus Christ. He replied, "Us Muslims and you Christians are the same except for two things: You believe Jesus was God; we know he was only a prophet. And you Christians love the Jews, whom we hate."

He listened for a few minutes as I told of the miracles Jesus Christ performed in my life and of several Muslims who had committed their lives to Jesus Christ after having a dream or vision. He replied, "It was all delusional and merely imagination." I responded, "Like the apostle Paul after his Damascus Road experience, these former Muslims have given their lives to Jesus Christ in spite of persecution and facing possible death." Even after I paid and tipped him, he stayed to listen several more minutes as I shared how only Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies.

Time ran out when he received a call to pick up another passenger. I did not get the chance to ask him these questions: "Have you ever really examined the evidence for your faith or the claims of Jesus Christ? Is it not true that you are a Muslim because you are forced to be? And why the intense hatred for Israel? How can this strong hostility for children of Abraham come from God?"

We parted peacefully—hopefully with some words that touched his heart and comments that caused him to ponder our conversation. I pray that one day this man, whose eyes reflected pain and sorrow and whose life seemed empty and meaningless, comes to know the only One who can give him hope, peace and joy. Perhaps our brief encounter that evening in San Diego will have eternal significance. I pray it does.

## Promise Made, Promise Kept

It was rush hour in Pittsburgh when Karen and I walked across the bridge. I noticed a man just sitting there, most people walking past as though he wasn't there—not giving even a glance. I made eye contact with him and said, "I don't have anything now, but I'll catch you later." He replied, "I appreciate you saying that."

An hour and a half later as Karen and I walked back across the river, he was still sitting on the bridge. When he saw me, he took off his hat and held it out. Putting some money in it, I asked, "Do you know why I came back?" He

responded, “Because you have the love of the Lord in your heart.” I said, “That’s true, but I came back because I made you a promise.” With his eyes focused on mine, I continued, “Jesus promised He would rise from the dead—and He kept His promise. Jesus also promised He would return one day—and He will keep that promise.”

It was a brief encounter, but an opportunity to share the love of Christ, the promise of His coming and that, as a believer in Jesus, I kept my promise.

## Witch Doctor Hears and Trembles

After ministering at two remote mountain schools in Haiti and visiting the witch doctor we met along the path, we headed back to the compound. We had hiked down the mountain and were riding in the van when we saw a large blue building painted with satanic pictures. The inside walls showed pictures of Lucifer being ejected from Heaven and “twisted” Bible stories. Although the witch doctor was not there, many Haitians began coming inside with us. I asked one of the women, “Who do you worship?” And she responded, “Lucifer.”

A man showed up from somewhere whose name was LuLu, a voodoo witch doctor. I spoke to him about what the pictures represented and then explained that Jesus Christ is the true God and He is the one with ultimate power. I told him that Jesus offers forgiveness and salvation, while Satan, when he is done with him, will kill him. Jacques, the former witch doctor with us, also shared his testimony with Lulu (who knew of Jacques’ conversion).

I shared Revelation 20:1-11 concerning the Great White Throne Judgment and the eternal importance of having his name in the Book of Life. Lulu listened intently but trembled as I talked. He said he was not ready to give his life to Jesus because he still owed Satan too much. He let me pray for him as all the people gathered around in a circle in this building. When we were done praying, this voodoo witch doctor had tears in his eyes.

I felt much love for LuLu and, putting my hand on his chest, said, “You need to give your heart to Jesus.” (His heart was beating so hard I felt it would come out of his chest!) He agreed and said he hoped to one day soon give his life to Jesus Christ. I told him I would pray that God would protect him until he gives his life to Christ.

I learned some time later that Lulu (probably in his thirties) was dead. It was not known whether he ever gave his life to Christ or went into eternity without accepting Him. I certainly hope to see him again.

# First, Listen



Jesus often taught by asking questions. I love to ask questions. The best way to be heard is to first, listen. You earn the right to be heard by listening, which also gives you valuable information about the person's thoughts and beliefs. In this way, you can be more relevant and effective while sharing the Gospel with them.

Some people would prefer to silence you immediately once you mention Jesus Christ, but I have found that if you listen, ask questions and are respectful, most will reciprocate and listen to you.

## Master Tarot Card Reader

Venice Beach in Southern California was known as Muscle Beach in the 1960s. It was the place where all my weightlifting buddies and I dreamed of going when we were teens. Several years ago, while ministering in California, I had the opportunity to visit Venice Beach with two of my nephews who were living in Southern California.

The apostle Paul observed and examined the idols in Athens before reasoning in the marketplace and speaking to the philosophers in the Areopagus (Acts 17:16-23). Following his example, I evaluated the environment and mindset at Venice Beach before interacting with the people and passing out some of my books and pamphlets. One area of the beach had open-air fitness equipment and gymnastic apparatus, so I began there. In an attempt to get myself acclimated—and maybe to fulfill a teenage dream—I climbed to the top of a high rope, did a few tricks on the gymnastic rings and parallel bars, punched the speed bag for a few minutes and did some pull-ups. Now, I was ready for interaction.

Lined along the beach was a seemingly endless array of booths displaying every imaginable philosophy from “Hate Christ,” “The Bible Stinks” and “Jesus Is a fake;” to “Give Your Kids Pot” and “Pot for Babies;” to animal rights and gay activists; to psychics, fortune tellers and tarot card readers.

At one of the booths, an elderly woman and her much younger husband were dressed in bathrobes. After engaging them in conversation for several minutes to discover the philosophy they were propagating, I gave the woman a

copy of my book, *Who Is This Jesus?* She was warmly excited and asked if she could really keep it—as virtually everything there was for sale. When I said, “Sure,” she promised she would read it.

After talking to people at several more booths, I felt drawn to one displaying a large sign advertising a master tarot card reader. I love to engage leading occultists and New Agers in conversation concerning Jesus Christ and the Bible. In the hopes of gaining an opportunity to share with this master of divination and fortunetelling, I asked him how he came to his journey of spiritual revelation.

Intrigued by my question, he asked me to sit with him at his booth as he shared the story of his spiritual journey, and I interjected questions and comments. We talked for almost an hour as he actually chased away potential customers by saying, “Can’t you see that I am in a fascinating conversation?”

He was an accountant and was almost finished writing a book revealing the secret that he said would bring peace to our nation and the world within fifty years. He stated that God speaks to him directly and the Bible is inaccurate; Jesus could not be the only way because we are all divine. According to him, everyone needed to have a marriage of their inner female and inner male self to attain enlightenment and become one.

Finally, he asked me to tell him about my spiritual journey. This was the opportunity for which I had waited. Had I not listened to him, he would never have listened to me. The sharing of my testimony and our interaction resulted in an incredible opportunity to present Jesus’ unique claims, prophecies concerning His second coming and one’s eternal destiny. I was able to share the whole plan of salvation with a man who would have otherwise rejected it outright. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit deals with this man in such a way that he comes to know the true Prince of Peace and finds real answers to life and eternity.

Like the tarot card reader at Venice Beach, we must look at each person as someone for whom Jesus Christ died. We must display respect—even though we disagree with their philosophy and lifestyle—as we share the love, truth and power of the Gospel.

## Anti-Missionary Rabbi

During a trip to the Holy Land, I learned of an anti-missionary rabbi lecturing in Israel and the United States. His focus was to persuade Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah to renounce Him. I did not have time to attend one of his meetings while in Israel, but as soon as I got back to the States, he just happened to be speaking at a nearby synagogue in Youngstown. A staff member, Jim Weikal, and I went to hear him.

At the end of his presentation, he asked for questions. I asked, “Is it not true that your prophet Moses said in your Hebrew Bible that if you obey God, He will

bless you, but if you disobey Him, He will curse you with various difficulties and you will be dispersed from your land? The northern tribes of Israel were taken into Assyrian captivity because of idolatry and rebellion and then Judah was taken into Babylonian captivity.” He responded, “True.” I continued, “Is it also not true that throughout Jewish history, the Jewish people have rejected and stoned their prophets? Therefore, how is it that within one generation after Yeshua proclaims Himself to be the Messiah and fulfilled many of the messianic prophecies, your Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem was ransacked by Titus in 70 AD, and the people were dispersed to the four corners of the world?”

No rabbi has ever been able to give me an answer to that question, but he, after pausing and acknowledging that he had never been asked that question before, gave an amazing, but absurd and inaccurate answer. He responded that because so many Jews had accepted Yeshua, the dispersion was God’s national judgment. However, during his lecture he contradicted that by saying Yeshua was insignificant and very few Jewish people at the time had accepted Yeshua. (The book of Acts indicates that though thousands of Jews, including many priests, accepted Yeshua in that first century, most Jews rejected Him. Throughout history, and especially in recent years, many Jews have accepted Yeshua as the Messiah.)

There is a dilemma, however, because prophecies in the Hebrew Bible concerning the Messiah have not all been fulfilled, a main reason, no doubt, why the Jews as a whole reject Yeshua. We do not have worldwide peace; the Temple has not been rebuilt; the dead have not been resurrected; the Torah (the Law) has not gone out from Jerusalem throughout the world as the prophecies in the Hebrew Bible foretell.

So, what is the resolution to this dilemma? The resolution is that Messiah would come twice: the first time to fulfill such prophecies as Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 regarding the suffering servant, who was to be rejected, despised and die as a sacrifice—the perfect Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

Now, we look forward to Messiah’s second coming when He will fulfill all the remaining prophecies about Himself in the Hebrew Bible. He will set up His earthly millennial kingdom in Jerusalem and reign on David’s throne, the dead will be raised and the entire world will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord and His Word. Then, there will be universal peace.

## The Columbo Tactic

Sometimes, I use the Columbo tactic. The television show character, Columbo, a homicide detective with the Los Angeles Police Department, was a friendly, seemingly absentminded man, whose remarkable success was based on an innocent query: “Do you mind if I ask you a question?”

Sometimes, I will ask: Tell me about your spiritual journey. This is most



useful when talking to anyone with New Age or experience-oriented beliefs.

As I spoke with the owner of a holistic health store in Phoenix, her New Age beliefs were obvious. We were having a great conversation on health and nutrition until I mentioned that I was a Christian. She immediately wanted to terminate the conversation because she had been repulsed by many “dogmatic and narrow-minded Christians who said Jesus is the only way.” When she realized I was willing to listen to her and that I was not going to condemn her, she listened to me with a receptive, open mind.

I said to her, “If Jesus is not the only way of salvation, then Christians are dogmatic, but if He is, then Christians are merely being truthful.” I continued, “Either the Jesus of the Bible is wrong, and we are all one with the universe and divine, and there are many ways to salvation, or Jesus is right, and the others are counterfeits.” Just believing in something doesn’t make it true, no matter how sincere you are. It is not the intensity of belief that makes something correct; it is who and what you believe in that really matters.

I then shared some convincing facts about the greatest One who has ever lived—the evidence for His existence, the truthfulness of His words, the accounts of His life and the prophecies and promises He fulfilled. What she was rejecting were false and inaccurate concepts of Christianity and Jesus Christ, not genuine Christianity and the true Jesus of the Bible. Before ending our conversation, she told me that for the first time the Bible and Christianity made sense. For further explanation, she requested some materials published by our ministry.

## “What If”

While ministering in Southern California, I walked into a large pseudoscientific UFO center. An older, distinguished man who was the director happened to be there, so I asked him some questions about his organization and his beliefs. Thus began an exciting conversation and, for over an hour, an incredible witness encounter. People entering the building wanted to talk to him, but he said he could not be interrupted.

He told me that Christians come in all the time and tell him he is going to hell and that Jesus is the only way of salvation, but he can always “smell” them and he throws them out. However, he said to me, “I can tell you are a seeker of truth.” I responded, “I am definitely a seeker of truth.”

Intermixed with my questions were comments such as, “I just heard a scientist lecture (which I did the night before at a Calvary Chapel church) who shared evidence for the personal God of the Bible. What if what he says is true?” He would respond, “No, no, that is not possible,” and then he would give me his occult/New Age/pseudoscientific/UFO philosophy.

I continued with more comments and “What if” questions such as: “This scientist said the Bible is amazingly accurate. What if it really is the inspired

Word of God? A pastor once said that Jesus is the only way because only He fulfilled the messianic prophecies. What if He is the only way? I remember hearing a prophecy teacher say that Jesus is coming again. What if all the biblical prophecies are being fulfilled? I heard a minister say people will stand before the White Throne Judgment of God and if their name is not in the Book of Life because they did not accept Jesus Christ, they are banned from God's presence. What if this is true? What will we say to God if we are standing before Him and He asks us why we did not accept His Son?"

He responded to each question by saying, "No, no, that is impossible." I then asked, "What are the eternal implications of rejecting Jesus Christ? The more I think about it, the wiser it seems to believe the Bible and Jesus Christ." This fascinating conversation had to be ended because I had another appointment. I pray the Holy Spirit speaks to this kind, but confused, man's heart to confirm who Jesus is and his need to come to know Him.

I could never have taken this man from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to the cross and from death to the final judgment by directly witnessing to him. He would have terminated our conversation quickly. But, by asking him "What if" questions, I was able to hear what he had to say and also to share evidence for God's existence, the reliability of the Bible, messianic prophecies, the second coming of Christ, his standing before the Great White Throne Judgment where his eternal destiny was being determined by whether or not he gave his life to Jesus Christ and if his name was in the Book of Life. Without conflict, this man heard every aspect of the plan of salvation—in question format.

## A Few More "What If" Questions

I have had many opportunities to witness to agnostics and atheists. Some have called me during the coronavirus pandemic, the threat of impending war or other crises due to their concerns or fears. They have listened carefully as I shared hope from God's Word and the biblical end-times scenario.

I have asked, "What if atheistic evolution is true (it's not, but let's pretend)? In that case I have nothing to lose, because I just cease to exist at death. But, what if creation is true (and I am certain it is)? You lose everything. What is a win-win situation for me—peace now and a sure hope for the future—is a lose-lose situation for you; no hope as your body succumbs to aging, no hope beyond the grave and eternal loss once you die."

I often close by saying, "If you are right neither of us will know, but if I am right, we both will know. I have nothing to lose but everything to gain. You have nothing to gain and everything to lose."

Using the "what if" question with those who believe there are many ways to God, I ask, "What if there are many paths to God or what if there is some means other than Jesus Christ which is the only way to God? My lifestyle and standards

will qualify me for virtually any of them. But, what if Jesus is the only way? What happens to those who reject Him or refuse to accept God's only provision for salvation? Do you really think God would let His Son die such a horrific death on the cross if there were any other way of salvation? If you are right and I am wrong, I still win, but what if I am right and you are wrong? You lose everything and I gain everything."

## Too Many Hypocrites

Jim Weikal shares the following illustration:

A man at the gym approached me about nutrition and supplements while I was exercising nearby. He was a friendly fellow, former Marine, and we talked for a number of minutes as he told me about beet juice, specific supplements he used, and a local health store in the area where I could get them. He was quite animated and knowledgeable about the subject as he continued.

Finally, I had a chance to open some dialog about spiritual things. So I used his interest of nutrition to say, "Thanks for sharing your insights that could certainly improve my physical life. I would like to return the favor by sharing my thoughts that could definitely improve your spiritual life."

He smiled and quickly rolled up his sleeve and showed me a tattoo on his forearm of Philippians 4:13 which he promptly repeated, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." Great! A kindred spirit. You know what it's like to meet a fellow Christian unexpectedly when you least expect it.

I asked him where he went to church. I didn't expect his answer: "I don't go to church, too many hypocrites. I study on my own." Probably, most of you reading this article have heard this line before.

"Wow, (pointing to my left) of all these people I see working out, there are no hypocrites or you wouldn't be here, right? And your place of employment must be heavenly since no sinful hypocrites work with you."

"You know the definition of an excuse," I asked. "It's a thin shell of truth stuffed with a lie." His reaction: A smile and a fist bump. He received my point well. We talked some more, and I invited him to the

church I attend and the men's Bible study I teach.

He said, "I will definitely come this Sunday." I found out the next day that he stopped at the church that same morning to check it out. (A man of his word!) I know not all encounters finish so well. But, praise God, this one did! So be prepared for the Lord's opportunities (1 Peter 3:15).



# Tell Me Your Story



## California Wildfires

I had hundreds of witnessing opportunities during the California wildfires by merely passing out bottles of water and saying: “Tell me your story.” After they told me their story, I was able to share some of my story. To encourage them in the midst of their tragic loss, hundreds of my books and audio tapes were handed out. Virtually everyone received them graciously. Some of these witness encounters are recorded in a booklet I wrote entitled *God’s Presence in the Wildfires–Faith Out of the Ashes*.

## A Story

After working out at a YMCA in San Diego, I was relaxing in the sauna. On this particular day, I struck up a conversation with a man from New York who was also draped in a towel. He complained, “This country is not the way it used to be. People just don’t want to hear your story anymore.” So, I asked him to tell me his story, adding “You are Jewish, aren’t you?” He replied, “Yes” and proceeded to share with me for about 30 minutes how he was a disenchanting Jew living in New York, searching for meaning and fulfillment in New Age spirituality. He shared a few things that were significant events in his search—not very impressive, but I listened politely.

Finally, he asked me, “So what is your story?” I had been in the sauna too long already so I suggested he give me a minute to cool off, and I would be right back to tell him my story. We both cooled off and went back into the sauna.

I said, “You and I know that salvation is of the Jews. Your Hebrew Bible is clear concerning God’s opinion about occultism, necromancy and fortunetelling, and yet you are dabbling in the very things your Jewish Scripture condemns. You are walking away from the God of your fathers, but you need to realize that there is nothing out there that compares with the overwhelming evidence in the Bible, and no experience that compares with knowing the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.”

I told him, “The God who created the universe is the true God. He divinely inspired the Jewish Scriptures which tell of the promised Messiah. I have spent

my life searching for this Jewish Messiah; I have come to know Him and He has changed my life.” He excitedly asked, “Who is the Jewish Messiah?”

Instead of immediately telling him that it is Yeshua (Jesus), which may have ended our conversation, I said, “Let me tell you how I came to know Him before I tell you who He is.” I then went on to share about the miracle of almost freezing to death in Santa Fe and being found by my brother when I was hitchhiking as a teenager. He freely acknowledged that the events surrounding that were a far more impressive miracle than the little coincidences that led him into New Age beliefs. He listened intently as I continued to share how I came to know the true Messiah.

Then, he asked again, “Well, who is the Jewish Messiah?” I said, “He is Yeshua.” He calmly replied, “You mean Jesus is the Messiah?” I said, “Without a doubt; He fulfilled the Hebrew prophecies. He is the one revealed in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. He is the coming King to fulfill the remaining messianic prophecies.” Silence dominated as he seemed to honestly ponder my words.

I felt the Spirit speaking to my heart to give him a copy of my book *Who is this Jesus?* My purpose that day was to plant the seed for the sake of the Kingdom of God. I trust the Lord will use that book—or someone else—to water that seed, and I pray that it will bear the fruit of another person coming to know the Messiah.

## A Hostile Response

On another day, several men enjoyed the heat of the sauna as two of them were discussing religion. One was a younger man with a shaved head who had Mongolian features, resembling a Buddhist monk I had met while ministering in the Himalayas. The other man told how the last 10 years of his life had been rough, but that his life was finally coming back together because of his New Age practices and the philosophy of yin and yang. Meditating under a pyramid covered with organic earth and other such practices helped him deal with the negative issues in his life. However, he indicated that, in spite of that, he was more confused and his life more chaotic than ever.

After about 15 minutes of his story, he asked what I believed. I said, “I believe in the historical crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ as being the pivotal focus of history. Jesus has radically changed my life for the better.” His response was simply, “Yeah, Jesus is OK, but there are many ways to God.” When I responded, “Jesus said, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me’” (John 14:6), he went ballistic, screaming that this is nonsense, and I have absolutely no evidence for it.

Although upset, he listened as I calmly shared evidence for the truth of Jesus and the Bible from history, archeology, science and prophecy. For the sake of the other man, I also told how many Buddhists and New Agers were coming to

faith in Jesus Christ because they were empty and still searching.

Because his attitude was still belligerent, I said, “Sir, I listened to you for 15 minutes concerning your New Age beliefs and practices. You gave me no viable evidence to validate them. You are the one who asked me what my beliefs are, and I responded. You then demanded evidence and I have given you ten irrefutable pieces of evidence, yet you still choose to be hostile and reject them. Doesn’t it speak volumes to you that as soon as I mentioned Jesus as the only way of salvation, you went ballistic? It is between you and God as to how you deal with this information.”

The men around us saw a stark contrast between his ranting and raving and my composure; the difference between his confusion and the confidence I had in my faith in Jesus Christ. A few minutes later, the irate man and I were able to talk further in the locker room—this time a little more congenially. I pray the Lord brings this evidence to his mind and the conviction of the Spirit turns his heart, and the hearts of the other men, to the one true God.

## Meeting Jesus in Japan

After speaking at the Iranian center in London, a young lawyer from Iran in his late 20s or early 30s told me how he came to know that the God who created him is a God of love. When he had first begun to question Islam and Allah, and mentioned that perhaps God is a God of love, he was imprisoned in Iran and tortured both physically and mentally.

After a few months, he was released and able to get a visa, but only to Japan. In Japan, a little old missionary woman gave him a tract in Persian. It told about the love and forgiveness of God. He said, “This is the God I always knew existed when I was in Iran.” He gave his life to Jesus Christ and is now a powerful witness to Muslims.

## Being an Answer to Prayer

On another occasion, I took a Calvary Chapel pastor from North Carolina and his son (who at the time lived in California) with me to Ocean Beach. I felt led by the Lord to talk to a young man sitting on the grass. While conversing, we noticed that the man’s hands were badly cut and needed medical attention.

We purchased bandages and disinfectant, attended to the man’s physical wounds and began to talk with him about spiritual matters. He was extremely receptive and prayed one of the most sincere prayers I ever heard, committing his life to Jesus Christ. We referred him to a local church (Horizon Christian Fellowship) which had a homeless ministry.

I asked why he was so open to the Gospel. He replied that he had been very concerned about the condition of his hands and had prayed that morning,



requesting that God send someone to help him. He was acutely aware that God not only answered his prayers but loved and cared for him through believers who were not only in the right place at the right time, but sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

## Vietnam Veteran

Fred, an injured Vietnam veteran, repeatedly rejected any discussion about God and refused invitations to go to church, wanting nothing to do with either. Over time, however, as he advanced in age and his health deteriorated, he became more open to talking about Jesus.

One evening, after moving a car in his garage to enable easier access to his house through the garage door, he surprised me by showing me a DVD course he was taking on the life of Jesus. After commenting how awesome that was, he said, "But I don't know if God can forgive me." I responded, "God can forgive anything if we ask. His grace is not limited by anything we have done. Have you ever asked God to forgive you?" He replied, "Many times!" So I said, "Let's pray and settle this now so you can know for certain that you have been forgiven and that your name is written in the Book of Life. Then, when you leave this life, you will be welcomed into God's eternal Kingdom." We prayed and God gave this injured and troubled vet the assurance of forgiveness.

Fred attended church faithfully until a little less than two years later as his declining health hindered him from doing so. It was a privilege for me to officiate his funeral. Near his gravesite, family and friends heard how this man found forgiveness, new life and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

## See You in Heaven

It was about 8:00 p.m. My wife and I were riding from Viejas Indian Reservation to Alpine, California, in our daughter and son-in-law's van with our daughter and two grandchildren. My daughter, Tabitha, said, "Dad, I just saw the most destitute man I have ever seen!" He was sitting by the road with a sign that read, "Wanted food." As we approached the site, I checked the van for any food or clothes, but we had nothing. My usual bags of clothes, food and pamphlets for giving away were in the other vehicle, which was at Tabitha's house.

We stopped at a nearby fruit and produce stand, hoping to buy him some food, but the gates were closed. I wanted to at least talk with the man, but my young grandchildren were in the van and the road so busy, we decided that was not a good idea.

As we passed him, he appeared to be heading into the desert-like brush to bed down for the night. I breathed a brief prayer, "Lord, You will have to send someone else to help him."

A few minutes after 8:00 p.m. we arrived at my daughter's house. Because it was getting dark, I decided not to go back with food and clothes, but then the Lord strongly impressed on my heart to do so. I got a half-gallon jug of water and a jar of organic peanut butter and crackers and headed to where I saw him last. On the way, I said, "Lord, if all these attempts to give food, clothes and pamphlets to street people are worth the effort, please let me find him." Within a few seconds, I saw him walking down the shoulder of the narrow, darkened road which leads to Alpine. Making a U-turn and pulling in front of him, I got out of the car and asked, "Can you use some food and water and a ride?" He replied, "I sure can!" Along with the food and water, I gave him several shirts and a pair of pants.

Robert was in his 40s and underneath all the filth and stench, I could tell that he was a nice-looking man. He loaded his large, smelly pack into the backseat as he got in the front seat. I asked what brought him here and he said that he was from Yuma, Arizona, and had colon cancer. He'd lost his job; his wife had left and his family abandoned him because he could no longer hold a job and make money. He said that anywhere he had been, homeless people were thought to be on drugs or alcohol, but that is not always true.

I asked him if he had any church background, and he said when he was younger, he went to both Baptist and Catholic churches. He said he had his Bible with him and read it often; that he had a strong faith in God, but at times it was difficult to believe. Excitedly, he said, "I was really down, but I just asked the Lord to give me a ride into Alpine about five seconds before you stopped." He told me his name was Robert and asked what mine was. He called me by name as we talked like long lost friends.

Dropping him off where he wanted to go, I gave him a copy of my book, *The Last Days* and a copy of my testimony "The Taming of Godzilla." He assured me he would read them and told me he was very interested in Bible prophecy. After praying with him, I said, "I wish I had more to give you." He replied, "You gave me more than you will ever realize." As he thanked me repeatedly, I said, "If I don't see you again here, I will see you in Heaven, my friend." He enthusiastically agreed and left my car with a huge smile on his face.

## Rachel—A Story of Tragedy and Hope

We were in Tel Aviv waiting for our flight to JFK airport in New York. John, who traveled with me on our Holy Land Adventure, was talking with Rachel, an older, red-haired Orthodox Jewish lady with failing health. He asked me to give her a copy of my book *Who Is This Jesus?* which she graciously received.

On the plane, Rachel "just happened" to sit across the aisle from me. At one point, she glared in my eyes and said, "I believe in speaking straight. You are goyim (Gentile) and you look like a Nazi with your yellow shirt and the color of your hair and eyes." The Jewish man sitting between us responded, "He is not a

Nazi, he is eating kosher.”

Rachel then began to tell me a tale of tragedy. Both of her parents died in the Holocaust. One of her brothers was killed in the Golan Heights while in the Israeli army. Another brother was a general and was killed in Egypt. Her husband was killed in Lebanon. She said, “I do not believe in God.” I replied, “Then you let the Nazis win and they stole the most precious thing in the world from you—your faith.”

With tears in her eyes, Rachel listened as I told her the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the true God and that He loved her very much. I went on to share with her (and the Jewish man beside me who was also listening) about the prophecies concerning Yeshua (Jesus) in the Hebrew Scripture. I explained why the Jewish people as a nation rejected Yeshua but assured them that, just as the prophecies concerning Messiah as the suffering servant were fulfilled in Yeshua, someday all the prophecies of Messiah, reigning on King David’s throne from Jerusalem and bringing global peace, will likewise be fulfilled by Yeshua at His second coming.

I used the book of Daniel, as well as prophecies in the New Testament, to explain the coming of a world leader who would usher in a false peace and deceive many Jews and Gentiles. The Temple would be rebuilt, but desecrated by this world leader as he proclaims himself to be God, and then ushers in the greatest holocaust of Jews and Christians in history. I assured them that, when all seems hopeless, the Messiah will return and stand on the Mount of Olives as prophesied in the books of Zechariah and Acts. Then, Yeshua will fulfill the remaining prophecies, ushering in world peace and reigning from Jerusalem. God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

After I told Rachel that her Hebrew prophet Jeremiah stated about God, “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13), she drew the Star of David on a piece of paper; she added her name and phone number and told me to call her in San Antonio, Texas, where she would be staying for a while.

A couple days after arriving back in the States from Israel, I was busy preparing to leave on another ministry trip to California but felt compelled to call her. She told me she spent a day in the emergency room, and that the Jewish doctor who treated her wanted to read her copy of my book, so she gave it to him. She said that three Jewish women who were caring for her all asked questions about Yeshua, so she asked if I would send her four copies of *Who Is This Jesus?* and the blowup neck pillow I used on the plane.

I called Rachel several more times and each time she asked me to pray for her. I always did in Yeshua’s name and she always said, “Amen.” She had passed out the books I sent her at synagogue and wanted more. Her Jewish friends didn’t want them at first and said, “These books are about Jesus.” She answered, “Read it. He’s a nice man who wrote it. He’s telling you about God.” She requested ten more copies of *Who Is This Jesus?* and asked me to put her adult children (one

had brain cancer and the other was a rabbi) and her Jewish doctor's names in our prayer room. She sent me a package of matzah (Passover crackers) and other items. She also asked me to have "the messianic" call her too. (Sheree is a messianic believer in Yeshua who went with me, Karen and several others on the Holy Land Adventure.)

The phone calls from myself and Sheree continued, and Rachel's heart seemed more and more drawn to Yeshua. I sent her a DVD containing a discussion between three scholars (two of whom are Messianic Jews) about the suffering servant of Isaiah 53.

In all my life, I have never met so many Jewish people so willing to talk about Yeshua and biblical prophecy! In just one week, the circumstances were such that I was able to have in-depth witness opportunities concerning Yeshua with an Orthodox Jew, a Reformed Jew and a Conservative Jew. All were very receptive and most interested. Truly, the Lord is opening the eyes of His chosen people (Romans 11). Shalom!

## From Rebel to Chaplain

Bill was a macho soldier who drove an hour from his base in Germany to hear me speak Sunday morning and Sunday night at Darby Chapel on a Nuremberg military base. He spent the day with us and later that night wanted to talk to me alone. He said, "Bill, I am rough physically, but I cannot resist the peer pressure." He continued, "I have listened to your audio message on Courage To Stand Alone several times, and that's what I want!" A few years later, we met again in my office in Pennsylvania. He informed me of the wonderful things the Lord had done in his life and told me he was leaving for Iraq to serve as a chaplain in the U.S. Army.

Following are excerpts of Bill's story:

I was a child when my parents divorced. My father remarried, and I had a hard time accepting a new mother. My desire for my birth mother's love caused me to date at a very young age. I was always seeking the female love I had lost when my mother left. This early childhood trauma also manifested itself in a need to be accepted by others—"external validation."

The desire to fit in—to be a part of some group—caused me to form relationships of tremendous value outside of my family while my life at home was barely tolerable. Of course, the desire to fit in with the world cost me. I was learning to cuss, drink and smoke—and all the things that go with these, like lies and deception—all the while believing in God and Jesus. I could not see the disconnect.

I went to church camp, and it changed my life. I made my confession of faith and was baptized into Jesus. For the first time, I saw real Christianity and loved it. But, when I got back to my home church, I was given my gift Bible and sat in the “sinner’s pew” in the back of the church with the other teens. Christianity seemed to wear off. I remember wondering why church and church camp were so different. In time, I was right back to all the sinful things I was doing before. And, this happened over and over. I just did not get it. I could not see my own inconsistencies and contradictions.

I ended up having to go to a teen thing my dad knew about at Bill Rudge Ministries, and I met a guy who had a different Christianity. It was genuine; it lived and breathed; it was honest, sincere and consistent. But, since I had not seen anything like him outside of church camp, I figured it was the same difference between church and church camp—a kind of “bait and switch.”

As time went on, I continued to become increasingly like the world. But, every time I ran into this “Bill Rudge guy,” he was the same genuine full-of-life Christian that down deep I wanted to be like. I wanted the joy and hope that he lived and breathed through his faith in Jesus.

After high school, I went off to Bible college, but I was suspended my second semester due to my own sinful actions. After being arrested, my fiancée spent all of her graduation money to bail me out of jail. We got married, and I joined the Army and left for Germany.

Wouldn’t you know, this “Bill Rudge guy” showed up in Germany at a nearby military base. I went to hear him speak and met with him after the service. He still had the same hope, joy and faith in Jesus I had seen years before! He was still real, and it made me think. But think was all I did, because I was a Christian—I went to church and gave my money. Wasn’t that what it was all about?

The Army took God’s place in my life, and I worshiped it and its culture. All I wanted to do in life was get married, make sergeant, fight in a war and have a son. By age 25, I had done all of these and none of them brought satisfaction. I was very disillusioned after the Gulf War, and hanging out at the bar with other veterans didn’t help much.

Eventually, I was on the verge of divorce, had lost my job and

everything was falling apart. It was at this point I hit my knees and said, “God help me! I’ve ruined my life!”

The road back was not an easy one, but over time God restored all that had been lost and then some. Little by little I acknowledged all the idols I had created in my life to worship and made the choice to put them away. I realized that my Heavenly Father loved me not because of what I did, but because of who I was—His beloved child.

As things grew in focus, I wanted to share Jesus with my friends, especially those I had led the wrong way, and I wanted to serve Jesus out of gratitude. I was beginning to have joy and hope.

I got back in the Army, but this time I put God first. It was strange that all the things I sought before and never could attain now fell into my lap—but they really didn’t mean that much to me anymore. As I followed God closer and closer, more “God-incidences” began to happen. I was content to be a Christian Combat Engineer and help my soldiers come to Christ.

Eventually, I left the Army to go back to Bible college and while I was there, my professors encouraged me to look into the chaplaincy. They viewed it as a mission field and me as a “native” in that field. God continued to lead and prepared the way. Impossibility after impossibility was overcome—money, age, graduate school, Greek and Hebrew. In all of these, God’s provision was more than sufficient. Through all of this, I have been blessed to know Jesus and one of His true followers—that “Bill Rudge guy.”

Today, I am a chaplain in the U.S. Army, having served as a chaplain in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and am a beloved child of God. To God be the glory as He continues to work in our world. His ways surely are above our wildest imagination.

When Bill Rudge and his son, BJ, went to France to dedicate the Sergeant York Historic Trail and Monument, it was me (Major Bill Robinson) who picked them up in a military vehicle and drove them from Germany to France and then back to the airport in Germany. God is amazing!



# Why People Reject Christ



While Jesus said that “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him” (John 6:44), the following are six practical reasons (with illustrations) of why people do not receive Christ.

## 1. Never Heard

Some people have never heard the name of Jesus Christ or the Gospel message—at least in a way that presents the biblical evidence.

### **From Atheist to Believer**

Karen and I were in Houston staying at her cousin’s home while Karen received cancer treatments at Dr. Bryzinski’s clinic. We met Harold and his wife, Mary, the cousin’s mother and father-in-law. Harold was being treated at MD Anderson for cancer, and it did not appear he could live much longer.

Harold was a self-made man who had been an Air Force pilot in WWII, had traveled the world, and had no apparent need for or interest in God. He and his wife were self-avowed atheists who thought our belief in God was “cute.”

One afternoon, I asked if I could pray for them. They both smirked. I asked if I had said something amusing. Mary responded that my faith in Jesus was cute, so I asked them if they ever considered the evidence for Jesus Christ and the Bible. They responded, “There is no evidence for Jesus Christ and the Bible.” An hour later, we were still discussing the evidence. They both responded that they never knew there was evidence for faith in Jesus Christ and the Bible but found the conversation very interesting.

We talked several more times before Karen and I left Houston. I told Harold that God was not going to let him die until he was ready to meet Him. Over the course of the next year, he should have died several times, but they both agreed it was the prayers and Noni juice which kept him alive. Karen kept in touch through email, and we visited them at their home in Ohio a few times.

Each time we parted, I asked if we could pray for them to which they always agreed. I noticed that each time we prayed they seemed more open and receptive. After the first parting prayer, they snickered. Following the second



parting prayer, there was dead silence. After the third time Karen and I prayed with them, there were smiles. By the fourth time, they both said, "Amen."

Weeks later, we received a phone call from Harold's wife that he was in the hospital and not doing well. I knew this would probably be my last opportunity to bring him to faith in Christ. When I arrived at Trumbull Memorial Hospital in Warren, Ohio, there were several people in the room creating a real distraction that seemed difficult to overcome. I left the room for a few minutes and found a place to pray, asking the Lord to give me the opportunity to clearly communicate Harold's need to accept Christ.

When I came back, people were still there, but I decided to go for it anyway. I told Harold that soon he would be standing before the God he did not believe existed, so it was time to get ready to meet his Creator. I explained the need to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior and have his name written in the Book of Life. I promised that if he did, as soon as he closed his eyes in death, he would open his eyes in the presence of God.

I asked if I could pray with him, and he said I could. I prayed a prayer of salvation. In his weak voice, he said, "Amen." I am convinced he put his faith in Jesus Christ that night. Before leaving, I told his wife he was not going to be here much longer. Although he had exceeded all medical expectations for more than a year, I knew the end was coming soon. He died a few hours afterwards.

His family asked if I would do the funeral. I was honored to and was able to share how he went from being an atheist his entire life to becoming a believer in Jesus Christ. I gave a strong salvation message, and his family seemed to appreciate the funeral. One of his daughters said to me afterwards, "I am really confused; my dad spent his whole life teaching us that there is no God, and in the last days of his life, he gives his life to Jesus Christ."

My wife received an email from Harold's wife which read, "Bill did such a beautiful job for my husband—the whole family and friends say so. He was helpful up to the end. Love you both. Mary."

An email from his daughter-in-law said, "Bill did such a wonderful service! The whole family was so pleased with the things that he said. His wife appreciated everything that you both did for her and her husband. Karen, I will be praying for you and Bill. You, as you go for additional treatments in California and for Bill as he is traveling and for his finger [from a brown recluse spider bite]. Love Beth"

Eighteen years later, I officiated the funeral of Harold's wife, Mary. Once again, God was faithful, and I trust that she, too, is with the Lord.

## 2. Against Heritage and Bias

Some people refuse to accept Christ, and even persecute those who do, because it goes against their family heritage and cultural tradition. To them, it is a disgrace

and dishonor, to believe in Jesus. Some people are disowned while others are injured or killed for accepting Jesus.

When dealing with radicals and extremists, I tell them, “Let’s clear off the table and examine the evidence. But, you will not do that because the evidence will overwhelmingly support the Jesus of the Bible in an unbiased discussion, so you attack Christians and burn churches, and torture and kill Hindus or Muslims who accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.”

## Orthodox Rabbi

I was on a flight to Israel with several Orthodox rabbis on board. One rabbi was from Brooklyn, New York. While in flight, I noticed that there was an empty seat beside him, so I sat down and asked, “Would you like to talk about the Hebrew Bible?” He said, “I would love to. That is the most fascinating topic to me.” We sat for two hours as he responded to my questions regarding the Hebrew Bible and his faith.

Then, I said, “I believe salvation is through the Jews, and I want to know the Jewish Messiah. Yeshua claimed to be the Jewish Messiah.” I began to share with him some of the evidences in question format. He repeatedly said, “I don’t have answers for these things, but I will get them for you.”

I asked him, “Why is it that the Jews often stoned the prophets God sent to them? Could it be that Jesus was your Messiah and you rejected Him?” “No, no, no” he replied. I continued, “How about in AD 70 when Titus destroyed Jerusalem? The Temple is destroyed, the genealogical records are destroyed and only Yeshua could trace His ancestors back to King David?” He replied, “I do not have answers for these things, but I will get them for you.” (He never did.)

I asked one final question, “What would God have to do to get you to believe and accept Yeshua as the promised Messiah?” He looked at me and said, “There is nothing God can do to cause me to accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah.”

## Harvard Scientist

I was meeting with a scientist from Harvard in my office. (He wanted me to perform His wedding.) I said, “You know that if we cleared my desk and laid out all the evidence, it would not support atheistic evolution, but a Creator.” He nodded his head yes. I continued, “And you know that there is much bias against God and the Bible, so evidence is suppressed.” Again, he nodded his head yes. Then I said, “And, you know that you and many other scientists are victims of peer pressure from academia, so you accept the theories of atheistic evolution for fear of losing your tenure as a professor and scientist.” He lowered his head and nodded in acknowledgement.

## Gifted Mind

When dealing with scientists and atheists, I often mention Dr. Raymond Damadian, the amazing physician and scientist who invented the MRI. He was no doubt one of the greatest inventors in history and one of the most intelligent scientists in the world.

Dr. Damadian, whom I have been privileged to meet and converse with several times, was a firm believer in the biblical account of creation and a committed Christian. He told me he had to become a scientist to examine the evidence and realized it strongly supported a Creator.

The book, *Gifted Mind*, tells the remarkable and inspirational story of this visionary scientist who, against incalculable odds, fulfilled his dream and created an accessible, safe, non-radiological means of determining the chemical makeup of every cell in the body.

Dr. Damadian's comments concerning evolution are enlightening:

The non-biblical account would have us believe that all life originated from a single common ancestor—a slime mold—and give or take a billion years, we are expected to believe that the descendants of this slime mold climbed out of the ocean and stood up and started giving lectures. Do the math on that. The sheer statistics of that violate any sense of reality. ([smithsonianmag.com](http://smithsonianmag.com))

Another powerful quote by Dr. Damadian:

The highest purpose a man can find for his life is to serve the will of God. That is what motivates my work as a scientist: exploring and applying the laws of nature and of nature's God for the benefit of mankind.

## Family Over God

After more than a year of conversations regarding Jesus and the Bible, a radio engineer at the station where I recorded my broadcasts told me he was convinced that what I shared with him was true. But, Charlie also said that he could not accept Jesus because his mother never believed that way, and he wanted to spend eternity where she was. So, he rejected God's free gift of salvation in favor of the beliefs and traditions of his mother.

## 3. Pride—Refusing to Submit to the Creator God

It is often not evidence that keeps a person from accepting Christ, but pride and

an unwillingness to submit one's life (and lifestyle) to the Creator.

## Recognizing His Pride

Jeff was program manager at a local radio station which aired my weekly broadcast. I would usually go to the station late at night on Friday or Saturday to record my broadcasts for Sunday morning. Jeff was often there working late, and through my time at the station we became friends. Occasionally, our conversation would include spiritual issues and my faith in Christ. Jeff was intrigued but indicated he was an agnostic because he couldn't believe in a God he could not see and analyze.

Over the course of a year or so, we discussed every intellectual question he had concerning the evidence for God's existence and his need to give his life to Jesus Christ, yet he still declined to do so. One evening, I gave him an audio recording containing Josh McDowell's testimony.

Shortly thereafter on the Fourth of July, Jeff, his wife and friends were returning to their camping site and were listening to that audio tape in the car. When Jeff heard Josh state that it was not an intellectual issue or lack of evidence that had kept him from giving his life to Jesus Christ but pride, Jeff realized that it was the same with him. Later that night while sitting at a picnic table with his friend, David, Jeff surrendered his life to Jesus Christ.

Jeff grew in his faith and was a great friend to both David and me. For many years, Jeff was the voice of Bill Rudge Ministries by doing the intros and outros for our radio broadcasts and audio messages. Jeff continues to serve the Lord faithfully.

## 4. Hardened Hearts ...by Accident

Some people reject God because He allowed a tragedy to happen or did not answer a prayer, and, as a result, a child or loved one died or suffered greatly. For years, I was mad at God for letting my little brother be hit and killed by a car until, one day, I glimpsed the depth of His love and realized that He takes what the enemy meant for evil and brings good to fulfill an even greater purpose.

## ....by Disease

Still a relatively new Christian, I was in Bible college and doing street ministry in the city where the college operated a coffeehouse. While witnessing to a bricklayer with arms of steel, he angrily put his two hands around my throat and started to squeeze. As the blood flow and oxygen were being cut off, he asked, "Okay, Christian, are you ready to die?"

I may have been able to knee or elbow him or gouge his eyes with a finger

jab, but when I am being persecuted for my faith, I try not to use any physical force to resist or retaliate. I try to be like Stephen and trust God to either deliver me or give me the grace and strength to endure (Acts 7:59-60). I flexed my throat and slightly turned my neck as I responded, "If God wants me to die, then I am ready to die."

Suddenly, he released that vise grip around my throat as tears began to flow down his face. He told me why he hated God and Christians: his daughter died from a terrible disease, and God did not answer his prayer to heal her.

We talked further as I was able to share God's love and truth with him and bring some healing and help. I have learned to look beyond people's aggressive and obnoxious behavior to see the hurt which may be causing it.

## ....by Suicide

Gordon was angry at God for many years because his daughter committed suicide, and God did not prevent it. But, later—several hours before he died—he was led back to Christ and said, "I am not angry at God anymore." That was a wise decision—especially before entering into eternity.

## 5. Clinging to Sin

Many people reject Christ because they enjoy a lifestyle that is contrary to biblical revelation. They do not want to give up their "sin"—whether it is sexual immorality, drugs, alcohol, foul language or some other offense to God. Choosing to revel in the "passing pleasures of sin," they are unwilling to commit their lives to Jesus Christ.

## "Food for Thought"

During a flight, I was sitting beside the assistant curator of a museum in San Diego. He saw me eating something nutritious, so he asked if I was into health food. He was interested in health and nutrition, so we talked about that for a while. Then, I began to mention some of the many amazing ancient health laws of the Bible. He was enthralled. I expanded the conversation by saying that, being a museum curator, he was obviously knowledgeable about history, archaeology and science, to which he agreed. I continued, "There is nothing in Scripture that is contradicted by any historical, archaeological or scientific fact." He responded, "I have to admit that the Bible is very accurate." I went on to share some of those historical, archaeological, scientific and prophetic evidences of Scripture. He listened closely and, again, acknowledged the accuracy of the Bible.

I also mentioned to him that many atheists and agnostics I know, who have

converted to Christianity, admit that it was not the evidence which caused them to reject the Creator and the Bible, but their own bias and lifestyle. I then asked him, “Have you rejected the faith of your grandmother (whose funeral he was going to) because of some compromise in your life?” He put his head down as he admitted that he was living with his girlfriend.

I encouraged him to consider giving his life to the Creator who loved him so much that He shed His blood on the cross that we might receive forgiveness. He gave me his business card and told me he would get me into any of the museums in San Diego I wanted to visit.

## Covering Hidden Sin

While my witness was having an impact on the program manager at a local radio station, behind my back, another staff member there was trying to undermine everything I said. My ministry was the first and, at that time, the only parachurch ministry in our area. He told the program manager that I was a cult. This was ironic since I happened to be the region’s “expert,” at that time, on cults and the occult and lectured on that topic in many churches and schools.

His hostility was all a smoke screen to the real issue. He was offended because I did several radio broadcasts on overcoming sexual immorality. A few years later, he was arrested for child pornography. He opposed the light of the Gospel, so it would not expose the darkness in his life. His undermining of my Gospel witness to the program manager backfired because the program manager became a Christian, while he ended up in prison. I pray he truly repents and accepts Christ.

In another situation, I could not understand why a married couple strongly opposed me after I spoke on the biblical principles of commitment, control, courage and sexual purity at their church. Their anger was confusing until a few years later when they came to me for help with their marriage—they were both addicted to pornography. There is always a motive for hostility toward the Lord and His Word.

## 6. Fear

### The Muslim

During a Biblelands Studies on the Seven Churches of Revelation and Walking in the Footsteps of the apostle Paul with Biola University Talbot School of Theology, my son and I met a man known as Slim at a carpet facility in Cappadocia. Slim is a Muslim, and his father is a retired ambassador for Turkey. I struck up a conversation with him and briefly mentioned my faith in Jesus Christ. He came to see my son and me at our hotel at night (just as Nicodemus did with Jesus)—in fear of the Muslims, as Nicodemus was of the Jews.

We met in a TV room, where another Muslim was watching television and outside the door was a bar. Slim periodically glanced over to see if the other man was listening and possibly understanding the English we were speaking. He also kept a wary eye on the bar. He said that if he was not in a Muslim country, he would not be a Muslim. He asked if we had any evidence for our faith.

After two hours of sharing evidence for the Bible and Jesus Christ and answering his many questions with much discussion, I challenged him that the Lord had a purpose for his life and could use him to impact his country like the apostle Paul had done in this region almost 2,000 years earlier. I shared with him, however, that it would probably cost him his life, as it eventually did Paul's, but for the peace and joy and eternal life he would gain through Christ, it would be worth the cost. I promised to send him books and audio tapes when we returned home—which I did. I am certain Slim became a believer in Jesus Christ.

### **The Marine**

After several conversations with a retired Marine, he admitted the evidence for Christ was overwhelming. He said, "You have convinced me, but I have a problem. I don't like to be laughed at. I replied, "You can either stand alone for Jesus Christ now or, one day, stand alone before Him."

There were also certain things he did not want to give up—mainly women. He asked me, "How could you, at such a young age of 18, give up women, gambling, fighting and alcohol? Wasn't all that fun?" "Yes, it was fun," I responded, "but I found something far more fulfilling and for that I am willing to sacrifice anything and pay any price. If you really believe that God exists, then you should be willing to sacrifice anything in this life to inherit what He has for you in this life and the next."

He let me know that he was close to giving his life to Jesus Christ; I pray he soon makes the wisest and most courageous decision of his life.

# Without Excuse



This chapter contains insightful excerpts from an article Dr. BJ Rudge wrote for our ministry's newsletter.

I have met many atheists—such as my former college professor—who vehemently denied the existence of anything outside the natural world. He spent the whole semester trying to prove the foolishness of believing in God and the Bible. From his perspective, faith in God was devoid of sound reasoning and was merely wishful thinking. Although I earned his respect and we had some profitable discussions, he died several years later as a lonely alcoholic.

Many atheists, agnostics and “freethinkers” claim they have come to their conclusions through rational thinking and by thoroughly examining all the evidence. Despite not having the ability to know everything and be everywhere at the same time, they are certain God does not exist. They often portray themselves as being enlightened and intellectually superior, while those who believe in the existence of God are, in their estimation, delusional and in need of a spiritual crutch.

However, Scripture indicates they are the real fools (Psalm 14:1) and are “without excuse” for denying God’s reality. Consider the insightful words of the apostle Paul: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:18-20).

As Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says, not only has God instilled within each one a conscience that bears witness to His existence, but He has also revealed Himself through His creation. On the Day of Judgment people will be “without excuse,” or *anapologetous* in the Greek (“without a defense”) for rejecting God because of a supposed lack of evidence. There is more than sufficient proof that He exists.

The Real Reason: While I have heard many arguments against the existence



of God, most people admitted their underlying reasons for rejecting God were of a personal nature such as unanswered prayer, suffering and pain or unwillingness to change immoral behavior.

For instance, while at a soccer clinic I met a man named John. Every time someone would bring up the subject of God, John would get very agitated and start yelling that God did not exist and all religions were false. After a few days of his ranting, I had a chance to talk with John alone. During our conversation, I discovered why he was so hostile: He had family members who were survivors of the Holocaust, and he could not understand why God allowed this atrocious event to happen. Thus, behind all his arguments and hostile feelings, John denied God's existence because of the pain and suffering his family endured.

The apostle Paul goes on to talk about the second step people take after rejecting God: substituting the worship of the true God for something within creation: "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Romans 1:25).

When someone refuses to acknowledge the true God, he sets himself up as God. In essence, atheism leads to self-centered worship, where man, not God, becomes the center of his universe. This is the way John lived his life: accountable only to himself. He lived a life of self-indulgence as he pursued all forms of temporal pleasures seeking to find lasting fulfillment. Yet, despite all his attempts, he admitted to a void in his life and a yearning to find purpose and meaning for his existence.

As John and I continued our conversation, I was able to share with him why I believed in Jesus Christ. I explained how my faith was not a blind leap in the dark but was supported by evidence. I specifically detailed the various messianic prophecies that were fulfilled by Jesus as well as the historical evidence that surrounded His resurrection. By the time we were done with our conversation, this man who had been so hostile toward God and Christianity looked at me and said, "I never knew there was evidence to verify the Christian faith. In all my dealings with Christians, they never once took the time to share this information with me."

As the week of the clinic moved on, I continued to build a relationship with John. A few weeks later I received an email: John shared how much our conversation touched his life and that he was now open to further investigation. He closed by stating that just as in the movie "It's A Wonderful Life," George Bailey had impacted the lives of others; so, too, I had been a George Bailey in his life.

There are three important principles I use when dealing with self-professing atheists such as John: First, be ready to give a reason for the hope you have (1 Peter 3:15). You never know when a John will come across your path. Second, speak the truth in love (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Your motivation should be to represent Christ, not to try and win an argument. Third, get beyond what is being

said to understand why it is being said. Remember, behind every argument and hostile feeling is a person like John who is hurting and in need of the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ (John 3:16-17).

While some people have never heard the Gospel in a clear presentation, others willingly choose to suppress the truth. Even though, as fallen human beings, we suffer a separation and loss of relationship with God, we still have a clear witness about the existence of God in natural revelation. The vastness, complexity and order of all that we see indicate design by a Creator of awesome power and wisdom. We also have the revelation of God's Word and the testimonies of those who have come to know Him.

I believe that those who truly desire to know their Creator will be provided a way (Acts 8:26-29; 10:1-48; 17:27). I have met and heard about numerous people who seemingly had no chance to hear about Jesus Christ within their circumstances testify of incredible ways they came to know Him.

# Presenting the Message of Salvation



We must present a biblical message of salvation—not a diluted, distorted Gospel version. Salvation is more than just a simple prayer. It is a heart commitment. Both “easy beliefism” and its extreme opposite, “legalism,” attempt to gain salvation through good works, but are not biblical Christianity.

Many people have been inoculated with just enough imitation Christianity to be immune from receiving the real thing. They believe they are “protected” because they think they already have Jesus—though not the Jesus of the Bible—or they are convinced they already “tried Jesus” and He didn’t work, so they do not want to hear about Him anymore.

## Feel-Good Religion

After sharing my testimony at Fort Myers Salvation Army to a very receptive audience, God provided me with another opportunity to share my faith on my flight back to Pennsylvania. In an unusual turn of events, my wife and I both ended up sitting in aisle seats on the plane instead of beside each other as we normally do. The man who was supposed to have a seat in the bulkhead (due to a bad hip) was seated in a window seat instead. He was very upset because he was cramped and very uncomfortable. I offered him my aisle seat and he was very appreciative. Conversation ensued, and I learned that my flight companion was a businessman who was divorced, a former alcoholic with health issues and had no family.

As I talked to him about spiritual matters, the man said he was fine with Jesus because he attends the AZUR (as you are) Church where they play rock music and have neat rock concerts. He offered me a business opportunity, but I explained that I ran a faith ministry and chose not to have any diversions. This man’s only interests seemed to be women and making money.

While we do come to Jesus as we are, Jesus will not let you remain as you are! He will change your life and your lifestyle. My great concern was that this

man thought he had salvation when there was no apparent commitment to Jesus Christ. It was as though he was inoculated with a “cool” Jesus, thereby making him immune to wanting to know the real, biblical Jesus.

To me, one of the greatest deceptions—but sad reality—of our current, apostate trend is to be given a false hope. This man did not understand that we must not base our eternal destiny on feel-good religion, or man’s approval, but on the truth of God’s Word.

## Completing the Message

While witnessing, if I notice the person is losing interest or no longer open, I change the topic to something I know they want to talk about. Eventually, I will continue to share a little bit more about Christ; hopefully, enough to adequately present the Gospel.

Once, as I witnessed to a 23-year-old, former Presbyterian at the Self Realization Institute (they were setting up for their Halloween event), we were interrupted right at the point of telling her about my rejection of Christianity. Not wanting to leave her with that message, I had a friend with me occupy the interrupter until I could finish my testimony of coming to Christ. I shared with her how I, too, had rejected Western Christianity and searched in New Age spirituality, occultism and Eastern mysticism, but after reexamining the claims of Jesus and the Bible, I gave my life totally to Jesus Christ. At that moment, the man returned and put her back to work, ending our conversation.

## True Success

Successful evangelism is not merely producing numbers or generating excitement. Success is producing committed believers who are growing into maturity in Christ Jesus. God’s ultimate purpose for each of us is to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be faithful witnesses for Him.

Rejection is not failure. Failure is giving them no message to reject or presenting an unbiblical message of salvation.

## In Hell’s Half Acre

I was scheduled for a weekend outreach in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania in a neighborhood nicknamed, “Hell’s Half Acre.” It was like a time warp back to the 1960s and similar to the neighborhood in which I had been raised. It was known for drugs, alcohol abuse, broken homes and the occult.

The night before the special outreach, we did street ministry in the Hell’s Half Acre neighborhood, giving out many of my books and audio tapes to people living in the area. I talked to a man named Jimmy who was building a

motorcycle.

On Saturday, I coordinated an outside obstacle course for the youth in the large recreation area of Hell's Half Acre, while people from the sponsoring church set up a stage and loudspeakers to share the Gospel. I presented my testimony in three parts, spaced between the recreational activities. In between the second and third parts, Jimmy came over and said, "My wife and I have to leave, but you can't leave us hanging. How does your testimony end?" He had been listening from his porch! I gladly gave him an audio copy of my testimony.

The Lord touched many lives that weekend through a multiplicity of evangelism: speaking over a loudspeaker, one-on-one sharing and passing out books and audio messages. For months following, we heard reports of changed lives.

## Counting the Cost

Most witness encounters do not lead to immediate conversions. People need time to examine the evidence and count the cost before committing their lives to Jesus Christ. I encourage them to further investigate the claims of Jesus Christ and consider the choice they must make. Otherwise, their commitment will not last. Sometimes, however, the Holy Spirit has already been dealing with that person, or conviction is so strong that they are ready to immediately accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Then, I am eager to pray with them to give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Scripture is clear that salvation comes through faith and God's grace alone. Once someone repents of their sin and receives God's free gift of salvation through Christ, they should begin to walk in obedience to God's Word and grow in their relationship with the Lord.

## Parable of the Sower—Not Everyone

Jesus gave an insightful parable in Matthew 13:3-8:

Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

In Matthew 13:18-23 Jesus gives the interpretation of this parable:

Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Not everyone we witness to will accept Jesus Christ. Some of that seed will be snatched away by the enemy before it takes root. Other seed will wither and die or be choked out, yet some seed will result in many people coming into God's kingdom.

As believers in Jesus Christ, our responsibility is to sow the seed of God's Word and share the witness of our testimony. It is the responsibility of the hearer as to how they will respond. Sad to say, not everyone will accept God's amazing gift of salvation. Some will reject it outright and replace it with inferior—and in many cases—absurd or ridiculous beliefs and philosophies. Others will mock and ridicule the Gospel. Some even becoming hostile.

No matter how hard I try, I cannot reach everyone. Neither Jesus nor the apostles, neither Paul nor Peter, reached everyone.

## Unscriptural Extremes

Some Christians fall into one of two extremes concerning evangelism:

1. Complete indifference to people's eternal destiny—either believing that if someone is destined for salvation, then God will take care of it, or “universalists” who believe everyone makes it into heaven.
2. Obsession to witness to virtually everyone they come in contact with—often in an aggressive, argumentative and annoying manner. Caring more about quantity than quality, they turn people off to the Gospel.

Jesus sometimes left the crowds to go up on a mountain to pray or rest, or to cross the Sea of Galilee to minister in another region.

Paul wanted to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit would not let him; instead, he received a vision of a man in Macedonia pleading with him to come there (Acts 16:6-10).

When Paul entered the synagogue in Ephesus and reasoned with the Jews, they asked him to stay for a longer time. Paul declined, telling them before he sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea, that he would return again if God willed (Acts 18:20-21).

A young man I met while I was serving as a youth pastor in North Carolina, felt he had to witness or give a tract to everyone he met on the street. He was miserable and under tremendous bondage when he missed someone, causing him overwhelming guilt. He was not being led by the Spirit or adhering to biblical instruction concerning evangelism. He was a victim of a self-imposed legalism and distortion of God's Word.

## Multiplication Instead of Addition

If Adam and Eve had tried to populate the world all by themselves, we would not have a population explosion today. But Adam and Eve had children, and their children had children, and their children's children had children and so on. Now there are billions of people on this planet.

We also must use multiplication rather than addition to evangelize this world. I personally witness to hundreds of people every year, and touch thousands of lives through speaking engagements, radio broadcasts, website and books, and in many other ways. Several of my staff also love to share their faith in Christ with people they meet. But even if each of us lived to be a hundred, we could not reach everyone in this world.

However, what if each and every Christian witnessed to just one person a week? What if every Christian led only one person to Christ in a year? Over one billion new converts would be added to the church in just one year. And what if those new converts were disciplined and trained to reach others? Everyone on this planet could hear the Gospel in just a few years.

At my speaking engagements, books I have written on a variety of biblical topics are made available. I tell the audience that the books are free of charge, but when they are done reading them to pass them along to a family member, friend, student or athlete; send them to a prisoner, military personnel or missionary—someone in the U.S. or in another country. In this way they are helping us multiply our efforts to get the Gospel across the U.S. and around the world.

Another way we multiply our outreach efforts is by having volunteers deliver loads of our biblical resources and Bibles to several international mission organizations who ship them in large containers to various mission fields worldwide. Along the way to the various states where these organizations are located, the volunteers give packets of our new books to people at various locations or to pastors (or their secretaries) at churches they happen to pass along the way.

# The Deception of Feelings

BJ Rudge, shares this account:

I was witnessing to a man devoted to a religion which claimed all paths lead to God. He believed the founder of his religion was the true manifestation of God. So I asked what credentials the founder of his religion had to persuade me to become a follower. He said that if I read his writings I would get a feeling in my heart that he was truly a messenger from God.

While I can appreciate the importance of an emotional response to one's faith, feelings change like the weather. I explained to him that I was not willing to invest my life and trust my eternal destiny on a mere feeling.

Devoid of any further reasons to persuade me to accept his belief system, I began to share with him the credentials of the One and True manifestation of God. I shared with him that Jesus Christ fulfilled messianic prophecy, lived a sinless life, performed miracles, provided the remedy for man's condition (sin) and demonstrated His authority over death by rising from the dead. After setting forth these reasons, this man sat in utter silence. The founder of his religion had no such evidence.

When you compare Jesus' résumé to any other religious figure, you quickly discover that He, alone, is worthy of placing your life and eternal destiny in His hands. As the apostle Peter stated, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life..." (John 6:68).



# Turning Believers into Disciples



A mother does not give birth to a child and then leave it to die on the delivery table. She does not say, “Okay, kid, I gave birth to you, now you’re on your own.” Likewise, you should not lead someone to Christ and then let them die “on the delivery table.” You must do follow-up to help new believers grow in their relationship with Christ and disciple them so that your fruit “will remain” (John 15:16).

## Twofold Purpose of Evangelism

In John 15:16, shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus gave the twofold purpose of evangelism. He said:

You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain....

1. “Bearing fruit” is evangelism—leading others to faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Son of God.
2. “Fruit that remains” is discipleship—helping new believers grow in their relationship with the Lord and remaining faithful to Him and His Word.

This is the twofold purpose of New Testament evangelism.

## Two Martial Artists – Two Different Outcomes

I went back to my karate class as a brand-new Christian and began to tell the students and instructor about Jesus. One of the students, Bob, quickly gave his life to Christ, but as he was my first convert and I didn’t know what to do, I did nothing. I thought that I fulfilled my mission with him, and now, it was between him and the Lord. A few months later when I returned to class, he was back to his old beliefs and lifestyle and no longer was interested in Christianity.

A year or so later, I was working out in the martial arts with another guy

named Bob and led him to the Lord, also. I had learned from my previous mistake, so I spent time discipling Bob, gave him a Bible, books to read and got him into a good church. Within a few years, he went to the Bible college I had attended. Bob is still faithfully serving the Lord and is one of the testimonies in my book, *Why I Quit Karate*. He also went with me on the Holy Land Adventure a few years ago.

The first Bob and two of his other friends were having breakfast together. One of them happened to share a story about me before I came to Christ. They realized that each of them knew me from my past and each one had what they called “Bill Rudge stories.” All three of them unexpectedly showed up at the ministry center one summer day. We talked about old times, and since none of them knew the Lord, I shared how and why I gave my life to Jesus Christ. It was a great opportunity to rekindle that witness for Jesus Christ to Bob and also to witness to the two other guys.

## Instruct, Train and Disciple

After Karen and I gave our lives to Christ as teenagers, the pastor of the church we attended, along with many others, helped disciple us. They invited us to their homes for dinner, fellowship and Bible studies; encouraged us, prayed with and for us, and in many other ways helped us grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ. They inspired us to spend time in the Word and prayer, memorize Scripture and share our faith with others.

Likewise, you need to encourage those you lead to Jesus Christ to attend a biblically based church. Tell them they need to be baptized—preferably immersed as is the scriptural pattern. Invite them to Bible studies and spend time with them in prayer and fellowship. Instruct, train and disciple new believers as exemplified by Jesus and the apostle Paul.

## Jesus’ Three Circles

Jesus had three circles of ministry. First, the many, with whom He had limited contact. In synagogues, villages, by the Sea of Galilee, in Jerusalem and in many other places, Jesus spoke to crowds of people as He taught, told parables, answered questions and performed miracles.

Second, Jesus spent more time with individuals like Mary, Martha, Lazarus and the 70 (whom He sent out in pairs as witnesses).

The third group are the 12 disciples. Jesus spent extra time investing in this group. They virtually lived together for three years. They walked, talked, ate and slept together as Jesus imparted His life, instructing and ministering to them.

# Train, Then Send

After only three years of public ministry, Jesus fulfilled His mission and entrusted the future of the church to His disciples whom He had trained and discipled. He commanded them to take His Gospel everywhere—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the end of the earth—which they obediently did.

Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

## Paul Followed in His Steps

The apostle Paul followed Jesus’ example of training disciples. Acts 18:23 tells us: “And having spent some time there, he [Paul] left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.”

During Paul’s third missionary journey he visited the churches established during his first and second journeys. Equally as strong as his desire to bring Jews and Gentiles to faith in Christ was his desire to do follow up and strengthen believers in their faith.

Imprisoned in Rome, the apostle Paul knew his death was near and that his ministry almost over. He wrote to Timothy, his beloved son in the Lord: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

## Training and Delegating

When I started this ministry, it could have been a one-person outreach. Initially, I would have reached more people with all my time and energy focused on what needed to be done and not be distracted by training others to help me. Besides, I could have done it better myself at that point. However, I knew that the “addition” principle (doing things myself; touching lives one at a time) would soon be surpassed by the “multiplication” principle (training others to assist me). So, as well as spending time doing personal evangelism, speaking, writing, radio broadcasts and so on, I choose to train others. Delegating various responsibilities to staff and volunteers has greatly multiplied and maximized my time and efforts. (In fact, this book you are now reading would not have been completed without the help of several volunteers.)

There is no way I could be an expert in every aspect of this multifaceted ministry. Therefore, surrounding myself with committed people who either have the necessary skills, or are willing to learn them, has proven to be a wise strategy.

While touring the ministry center, a successful businessman from out of state said, “I support many ministries, but I have never seen a ministry like yours that is so effective in maximizing its resources and has so many volunteers willing to help in any way possible!” I replied, “We may not have an abundance of funds, but God has faithfully supplied everything we need. Our ministry supporters and volunteers are truly some of the best and most faithful people in the world.”

Hundreds of staff and volunteers have been trained since this ministry was founded in August 1977. They have been a crucial part in helping to fulfill the goals and vision God has given me. Numerous staff and volunteers trained by this ministry have become pastors, chaplains, missionaries, youth ministers, Sunday school teachers; have started their own ministries or serve in leadership positions in various ministries, missions and community organizations. They have touched countless lives for Jesus Christ—people I could have never reached on my own.

My son and daughter also assist me and Karen in this ministry, and now, I am training my grandchildren—telling them Bible stories, playing Christian songs, telling them stories about my youth and how God changed my life, the lessons He has taught me, the challenges I have faced, and the miracles I have witnessed. They have helped at the ministry in a variety of ways.

Training and delegating are exactly what Jesus did. He trained His disciples, then entrusted His mission to them to take the Gospel throughout the world.



# Salvation: Easy as A-B-C and D



I could give hundreds of more witness encounter examples and creative ideas to share the Gospel but, hopefully, those provided in this book, along with the biblical insight provided, have inspired and motivated you to be a living witness for Jesus Christ!

Every witness encounter has its own approach and conversational style, but the final message is as simple as A-B-C and D:

**A**—Admit you are a sinner in need of God’s forgiveness. There is nothing you can do to pay the penalty of sin or earn your salvation (Romans 3:23). The penalty for sin is death, and only God’s righteous, sinless Son could pay that penalty. So, the only solution to your dilemma is to come to Jesus Christ in repentance, receive His free gift of salvation and accept Him as your Savior and Lord. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

**B**—Believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead. Just believing in something doesn’t make it true, no matter how sincere you are. Nor is it the intensity of belief that makes something true. It is who and what you believe in that really matters. Jesus said, “...unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins” (John 8:24). To “believe in” is more than merely acknowledging the reality of Jesus Christ; it means “to trust in and rely on”—a belief that results in committing your life to Him.

**C**—Confess with your mouth that Jesus died and rose again. Tell others that you have accepted Him as your Savior and Lord. “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:9-10).

When you sincerely act on A, B and C, something amazing happens. God’s Spirit indwells you and begins to mold you into a new creation. Your name is written in the Book of Life! And, when you depart this life, you will be welcomed into God’s eternal kingdom and receive all He has prepared for those who love Him.

**D**—Demonstrate your faith by growing in your personal relationship with

Jesus Christ through regular Bible study and prayer, fellowshiping with other believers and being a witness to those who do not yet know Him. Demonstrate a changed life as His Spirit and Word transform you and mold you into the person God created you to be.

Knowing and living for Jesus Christ is a wonderful spiritual journey, filled with life-changing experiences and eternal blessings. Your acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord will prove to be the wisest, most courageous and eternally significant decision you will ever make.

## No Greater Love

There is no greater act of love than to share God's love and forgiveness. There is no stronger display of courage than to be a witness for Jesus Christ. There is no better gift you can give than to tell someone about God's free gift of salvation and eternal life. There is no greater joy than to lead someone to Jesus Christ and to see them grow in their relationship with Him.

"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12:3 NIV).

People's eternal destinies are on the line, so get out there and befriend them, interact with them, share your faith with them and offer them the Good News of Jesus Christ.

## The Days of Opportunity

God has called us to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Have we squandered our time and opportunities or wisely used them? How many of our friends and loved ones have already passed into eternity? Now is the time to share Jesus with family, neighbors, coworkers and others, while we still have the chance—while there is yet time.

As believers in Jesus Christ, we should care less about being politically correct and more about being biblically accurate! We must "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). Beneficial and lasting social change will only come when the hearts of the people are turned back to their Creator. While many causes are noble, all will prove inadequate and inferior to the transforming power of the Gospel.

Imagine the eternal significance, as well as the social and political benefits, if Christians put increased effort into evangelism. Imagine the positive influence on our nation and world if the life-changing, eternal life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ was embraced, and compassion instead of hostility reigned in relationships. Imagine how, by performing loving service in Jesus' name and choosing to live exemplary lives, we would become the "salt of the earth" and the

light of the world” (Matthew 5:13-14).

The heartbeat of Jesus, before He returns, is the fulfillment of His Great Commission: to proclaim the Gospel across the entire world. Evangelism is such a priority that Jesus’ parting words before His ascension instructed the disciples to be His witnesses locally, nationally and globally (Acts 1:8). Jesus went so far as to state that the end will not come until the Gospel is preached in all the world as a witness to all nations (Matthew 24:14).

During the Tribulation period—in the midst of intense persecution—God will use the Two Witnesses (Revelation 11), raise up 144,000 Jewish evangelists (Revelation 7 and 14), and use even angels to proclaim His everlasting Gospel (Revelation 14:6-7). The harvest will be “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language” (Revelation 7:9).

## True and Lasting Riches

Wise financial planning includes far more than accumulating retirement accounts and material possessions. Countless people have lost large amounts of money that might have been used for the Kingdom—providing them with an eternal reward to surpass any monetary gains they had hoped to achieve. Do not let the words of James 5:2-3 be true of you: “Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!”

The day rapidly approaches when each of us will give an account to God concerning our stewardship of time, talents and treasures (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Therefore, it would be wise to focus on God’s priority: Evangelism and Missions. A significant portion of our resources, time and energy should be put into sharing the love and truth of Jesus with a lost and dying world. This is sound financial planning and, most certainly, the best inheritance.

Ask yourself: Do I care more about my political agenda than my testimony for Jesus Christ? Do I give more to social and political causes than to missions? Am I neglecting evangelism and witnessing because it is offensive to some? Am I using my life and money primarily for personal pursuits and pleasures or to help get the Gospel throughout the world? What am I doing to advance God’s Kingdom and reach people for eternity before the days of opportunity are gone?

Remember, true and lasting riches consist of spiritual blessings and the legacy of faith you leave your loved ones. We cannot take anything into eternity with us except the lives we touch for Jesus Christ!



# Who Will Go?



The following poem was written by Bruce Miller, a childhood friend of Bill Rudge. His dramatic conversion gave him the desire to lead others to Jesus. He currently serves in prison ministry.

## Who Will Go?

*by Bruce Miller*

It's called the "Great Commission,"  
Just who's supposed to go?  
You'll find the answer on your knees  
If you really want to know.  
The harvest has been ready,  
And the fields are very ripe;  
Pray to the Lord for laborers,  
Willing to share the light.  
It seems today, and always has,  
The ones that go are few;  
It's written in the book of Luke  
In chapter ten, verse two.  
Some say, "I'm just too busy,"  
Or, "The timing isn't right."  
Lift your eyes; look around;  
The harvest is already white.  
When you see Jesus face to face,  
And He asks, "What did you do?"  
I hope and pray your answer is,  
"I labored, Lord, for You."

Bruce continues:

The Great Commission is, and should be, the priority of the Church and of every believer in Christ. It is not an option but rather a command. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus did not ask the disciples to go; Jesus commanded they go to the uttermost parts of the earth (see Acts

1:8). In Luke 10:2, Jesus told the disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers, and then in verse three, He sent them into the harvest fields.

“Who Will Go?” It is a question intended to stir your heart and mind. After reading my poem, it is my hope that you, and myself as well, may respond as Isaiah the prophet did:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isaiah 6:8)

# Why Believers Should Know How to Defend the Christian Faith



The following chapter is contributed by Dr. Michael Weis, who is a professor, pastor, video operator, editor and social media manager at Zion's Hope. Both he and Zion's Hope have graciously given us permission to share this beneficial chapter with you.

## Be a Defender

Have you ever had to “defend” Jesus, the Bible, or Christianity? How did you do? Well? Not so well? Do you wish you could have done better? Regardless of your answer, let's agree it's important for believers to know how to defend their faith.

The question is: Why is this so important? Let's consider some things.

## Discovering the Need

I was on an independent film shoot some years ago, and the audio man was Jewish. He asked me, “Michael, why are there four versions of the Gospel?” At the time, I had no idea why; I didn't know what to tell him. It would have been a golden opportunity to share the Gospel with him as he had given me an opening, but I wasn't equipped to make good on the opportunity.

In part, this is what got me interested in apologetics. I wanted to begin studying what it was I believed, and why I believed it. I wanted to be able to defend the Christian faith. I knew I needed to study Christian apologetics, and am convinced every believer should do the same.

## Defining the Term

What does the word “apologetics” mean? One thing this word does not mean is apologizing for being a Christian, though in our culture, there are believers who hold to this definition. Rather, “apologetics” is an area of theological study dedicated to intellectually defending truth claims. These “claims” include Jesus, the Bible, God, miracles, the Creation and numerous other topics.

Several portions of the Bible address the importance of apologetics. One is Philippians 1:7 (KJV), where the apostle Paul says,

Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence [sic] and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

This brings us to the classic “apologetics passage,” 1 Peter 3:15 (KJV):

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer [a defense] to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

The word “answer” here or “defense” (as well as in the passages in Philippians) is derived from the ancient Greek word *apologia*, which carries with it the image of an attorney presenting a court case. As we live out the Christian life, we have to think like Christian attorneys. We’re going to encounter people who have questions, and we’re going to have to answer those questions. We are also going to encounter those who are hostile, and we’ll need to address their objections.

When we acknowledge Christ as Lord, people are going to ask, “Why? What makes Christianity so different from all other religions?” Jewish people want to know why we believe Jesus is the Messiah. Muslims want to know why we believe Jesus is not a prophet like Mohammed, but instead is the Son of God. Hindus want to know why they should believe in Christ alone instead of multiple gods. Others want to know why they should believe in Jesus rather than ... fill in the blank.

Other people will believe things contrary to Scripture. This is particularly true of cults. How about when some of these come to your door? What a great opportunity to tell them about Jesus! You have a captive audience right in front of you.

## The Spurgeon Dilemma

The godly, renowned 19th century British preacher Charles Spurgeon offered his now-famous thoughts on the defense of the Gospel:

A great many learned men are defending the gospel; no doubt it is a very proper and right thing to do, yet I always notice that, when there are most books of that kind, it is because the gospel itself is not being preached. Suppose a number of persons were to take it into their heads that they had to defend a lion, a full-grown king of beasts! There he is in the cage, and here come all the soldiers of the army to fight for him. Well, I should suggest to them, if they would not object, and feel that it was humbling to them, that they should kindly stand back, and open the door, and let the lion out! I believe that would be the best way of defending him, for he would take care of himself; and the best “apology” for the gospel is to let the gospel out. Never mind about defending Deuteronomy or the whole of the Pentateuch; preach Jesus Christ and him crucified. Let the Lion out, and see who will dare to approach him. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will soon drive away all his adversaries.

Of course, there is truth in Mr. Spurgeon’s words—especially in the fact that we can’t argue someone into faith in Christ. The Gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation. Mr. Spurgeon is right that we must preach Christ, but we also must understand that Mr. Spurgeon’s time was much different than today. In his day, there was a cultural respect for the Bible, even if people did not believe in it. There was even respect for pastors and preachers.

Sadly, this is not the case today, and because of this we need to defend the truth with boldness. The more people deny, denounce and dismiss the Bible, the more we, as followers of Christ, need to stand up and say, “God’s Word is truth—and these are the reasons we believe it!”

## Reasons to Engage in Apologetics

1. Scripture commands it. This takes us back to 1 Peter 3:15 (KJV):

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer [defense] to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

2. The culture demands it. Yes, we “let the lion out,” but it must be demonstrated and defended in a world of lies. Believers must fight back against the lies perpetrated against God, Jesus, the Bible and our faith.

3. Bad theology requires it. There is a ton of bad theology out there, and believers must be able to dispel the bad with good. Good theology is crucial.

4. Our minds need it. When we read the truth of God’s Word, we are nourished in our relationship with God. Furthermore, God doesn’t expect us to believe blindly

in Him. He wants us to study and be prepared. Paul told Timothy:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV).

## How Should We Engage in Apologetics?

Again, 1 Peter 3:15 is our source, particularly the last four words, “with meekness and fear.”

Whenever we defend the faith, we need to do so with kindness and gentleness. The goal is not to win an argument, but to demonstrate to a lost soul the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be careful to never get angry or to dismiss others’ thoughts and beliefs as being ignorant. We are to engage them with patience and in love. We are to lovingly and boldly present the truth, but the Holy Spirit does the convincing, convicting and converting. We cannot change anyone!

Be prepared to be rejected, despised, or even hated. Remember, one of the claims of Christianity is that Jesus is the only way to salvation. We’re going to be accused of being narrow-minded, intolerant and unloving because of this. However, this is the world we live in, and we must preach and defend the truth.

## Ways to Improve Our Apologetic Skills

There are a variety of ways we can improve our skills.

First, we must know the Truth ourselves! We need to read, think upon and study Scripture, as well as find good resources.

Second, and closely related, is to ask ourselves difficult questions: Do I know Jesus as my Lord and Savior? How do I know the Bible is true? What do I believe and why? Do I believe something only because my pastor or Sunday school teacher told me? How do I know the Bible is the only Word of God? While we should be able to trust church leaders, our faith is strengthened when we take the initiative to learn the Truth ourselves.

Third, our lives must reflect the life change only Christ can make. This does not mean perfection, but progression, being changed into His likeness. If our lives are not different than the world, why should the world listen to us?

Fourth, study! Get some apologetics books from biblically solid apologetics ministries with materials in written form, audio or video. Do your research, and by all means, pray to God for wisdom and discernment that you may be better equipped in defending your faith.

Fifth, think of the questions your family and friends have asked. What

answers would you give them?

Last, consider the questions the world asks. These include core questions of the heart: Where did we come from? Why are we here? What happens at death? Why is there suffering in the world? What do I do with my guilt? What about evolution versus creation? These also include cultural questions: What is the definition of marriage? Is it right to abort babies? Why is it wrong for men to enter women's locker rooms? Aren't all religions the same?

## Defend the Truth

This is a challenge for us. In recent years, I have been asked some difficult and heartfelt questions. As I look at the world and the Church, I am more and more convicted that Christians need to love the Truth, know the Truth, live out the Truth and defend the Truth.

As we engage with the unbelieving world—particularly in a digital-and social-media age—the more we see a strong defense of the Truth being questioned, and this Truth is needed now more than ever. When we study apologetics, we not only strengthen our faith, but we prepare ourselves to lovingly and boldly answer the questions others have, in order to clearly share the Gospel of the grace of God and salvation through Jesus, our Lord.

# Being Salt and Light in a Hostile Environment



**D**r. BJ Rudge shares important insights in this chapter which are excerpts from an article he wrote for our ministry's newsletter.

As Christians, we are called to impact our world for Jesus Christ. In His famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told His disciples they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Jesus' instruction is a reminder that all of us have a particular purpose, function and duty to perform in this world. As salt, we are called to have a flavoring, preserving and purifying effect. As light, we are called to point others to Jesus Christ. The question before us is "how can we be salt and light?"

One good answer is to consider how the world views Christians...as judgmental, hypocritical, narrow-minded and ignorant.

We need to be mindful of the fact that we live in a fallen world which is in rebellion to God (1 John 2:15-17; 5:19). Jesus told His disciples that just as the world hated Him, it would also hate them (John 15:18-19). The apostle John wrote, "Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates you" (1 John 3:13).

Since the Fall, humankind and all of creation have been affected by the consequences of sin (Genesis 3; Romans 8:19-22). These consequences are compounded because Satan has authority over this world (1 John 5:19; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). He strives to blind people from the truth of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

We need to understand that as Christians we live by different standards than the world. We are to look to the Word of God as our source of authority. In contrast, most people trust in themselves to decide what is right and wrong. Truth for them is not whether it lines up with God's Word, but rather is often dependent upon the circumstances one finds oneself in.

As Christians, we live for a different purpose. As citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20), we are not merely living for this life. Instead, as aliens and strangers in this world (1 Peter 2:11), we are seeking to glorify God as we wait



for the day when Jesus Christ will return to establish His eternal kingdom (Revelation 20-22). In contrast, many people in the world around us live only for this life. For them, the purpose of life is not to glorify God, but for personal pleasure, enjoyment and accomplishment. Therefore, it should be of no surprise when we see the world around us engaging in behaviors that are contrary to Scripture.

Christians must strive daily to be authentic in our faith and to live a life that is pleasing before God. As Peter wrote to Christians facing opposition and persecution:

Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when He judges the world (1 Peter 2:12 NLT).

All this being said, how do we effectively live for Jesus Christ in a hostile world environment? How can we be salt and light to impact our culture for Jesus Christ? During the Last Supper, Jesus stated to His disciples that the main identifying characteristic of a Christian is love:

I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another (John 13:34-35).

When we are united and demonstrate love as brothers and sisters in Christ, we show that we truly are His followers. Unity among believers was at the core of Jesus' prayer prior to His crucifixion:

I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me (John 17:20-21).

Authentic unity does not compromise the essentials of the faith. The great preacher Charles H. Spurgeon was correct when he said, "To pursue union at the expense of truth is treason to the Lord Jesus." Pastor and author, Adrian Rogers, accurately stated, "It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error. It is better to stand alone with the truth, than to be wrong with a multitude." If we want to be salt and light, we must avoid compromising the fundamentals of our faith and strive for an authentic unity, lest we undermine the very purpose of what we are about.

Authentic unity does not divide over nonessentials. We live in a divided world. People often segregate over issues such as race, social class and economic status. However, this should not be true of the body of Christ. We should never allow non-essentials such as the color of our skin or the neighborhoods we live in to divide us. We need to always be mindful that we are all one in Christ Jesus:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

True believers in Christ should function as one body with many parts where “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). If instead of tearing one another down, we encourage and build each other up (1 Thessalonians 5:11), we will be more effective in impacting this world for Jesus.

God desires all who love Him to strive for authentic unity so that we can demonstrate to the world we truly are His followers.

We must not lose sight of our true mission. The ultimate goal for the body of Christ is to reach this world with the Gospel. When we keep this biblical mandate in focus, we are reminded of two truths:

First, humanity’s greatest need is to be set free from sin. As the Scripture teaches, all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23) and are bound/enslaved by sin. The only solution to this desperate situation is the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf (Ephesians 1:7). It is through the proclamation of the Gospel that we are made aware of our sinful nature and realize the need to repent before our Creator. May we never forget, therefore, that sharing the Good News of Christ is the only hope for the world’s greatest need.

WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!” (Romans 10:13-15).

Second, unbelievers are not our enemies but our mission field. When we focus on sharing the Gospel, Christians are reminded that everyone is a sinner in need of God’s grace. The person inside the church, like the person outside the church, desperately needs God’s grace. We need to see those outside the church as people with whom we can share the very message that set us free from our former way of living (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Let us remain faithful to our true mission. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can bring forgiveness to the sinner and

hope to our troubled world. As the apostle Paul states:

God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners [enemies of God], Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).

God is looking for men and women who will inspire others. People who will show through the way they live, what it means to be totally committed to Jesus Christ. Ask yourself this question: “Is my life having an impact on this world for Jesus Christ—in the lives of my family, friends, coworkers and neighbors?” Maybe you are wondering how God could ever use “someone like me” to make a difference. Well, the key to being used by God is not merely based on your ability but your availability. Never forget that you, too, can be salt and light to impact your world for Jesus Christ!



# Appendix:

## Witnessing to Jews and Gentiles in the Book of Acts



Our message and witness today should reflect those of the New Testament apostles. If you want to have an impact on lives for Christ, then read the messages in the book of Acts that Peter, Stephen and Paul gave as they witnessed and spoke to Jewish and Gentile audiences. Looking up the following Scriptures will be well worth the effort. Do it as your personal Bible study over the next few days, and you will gain valuable insight on how to be a more effective witness for Jesus Christ.

### Examples of Witnessing to the Jews

- Peter addresses a crowd in Jerusalem shortly after the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:22-36).
- Peter witnesses to a crowd after the healing of the lame man (Acts 3:11-26).
- Peter and John stand before the high priest of the Sanhedrin after their arrest for the healing of the lame man (Acts 4:8-20).
- Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin immediately before being stoned to death (Acts 7:1-53).
- Paul speaks in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41).
- Paul speaks in a synagogue at Thessalonica where he reasons with the Jews from the Scriptures for three Sabbaths (Acts 17:2-4).
- Paul reasons with Jews and Greeks in the synagogue and at the marketplace in Athens (Acts 17:17).
- At Corinth, Paul reasons in the synagogue and tries to persuade Jews and Greeks as he testifies that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:4-5).
- Paul reasons with the Jews in the synagogue in Ephesus (Acts 18:19).
- Apollos refutes the Jews in public, proving from Scripture that Jesus

is the Christ (Acts 18:28).

- Paul speaks boldly in an Ephesian synagogue for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8).
- Paul's defense before the Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 22:1-22).
- Paul before the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:1-11).
- Paul at Rome testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade the Jews concerning Christ (Acts 28:23-28).

## Examples of Witnessing to the Gentiles

- Peter speaks to Cornelius, his relatives and close friends (Acts 10:28-48).
- Paul and Barnabas in Lystra (Acts 14:14-17).
- Paul and Barnabas preach the Gospel and strengthen the souls of the disciples at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (Acts 14:21-23).
- Paul reasons with those in the synagogue, marketplace and at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:17-31).

## Paul's Defense of His Faith

- Paul's response before Felix (Acts 24:10-27).
- Paul's defense before Festus (Acts 25:8-12).
- Paul's defense before Agrippa and Festus (Acts 26:1-30).

There is no greater act of love than to share God's love and forgiveness. There is no stronger display of courage than to be a witness for Jesus Christ. There is no better gift you can give than to tell someone about God's free gift of salvation and eternal life. And there is no greater joy than to lead someone to Jesus Christ and to see them grow in their relationship with Him.

# For More Information

Bill Rudge has produced numerous books, pamphlets and audio messages on a variety of timely topics. For a complete listing or a copy of his informative newsletter, visit [www.billrudge.org](http://www.billrudge.org) or write to:

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